

# [Crazy tomy mind. that event is the battle](https://assignbuster.com/crazy-tomy-mind-that-event-is-the-battle/)

Crazy Horse When I think back of the stories that I have heard about howthe Native American Indians were driven from their land andforced to live on the reservations one particular event comes tomy mind. That event is the Battle of the Little Big Horn. It isone of the few times that the Oglala Sioux made history with thembeing the ones who left the battlefield as winners.

When storiesare told, or when the media dares to tamper with history, it isusually the American Indians who are looked upon as the bad guys. They are portrayed as savages who spent their time raiding wagontrains and scalping the white settlers just for fun. The mediahas lead us to believe that the American government was forced totake the land from these savage Indians.

We should put the blamewhere it belongs, on the U. S. Government who lied, cheated, andstole from the Oglala forcing Crazy Horse, the great war chief, and many other leaders to surrender their nation in order to savethe lives of their people. In the nineteenth century the most dominant nation in thewestern plains was the Sioux Nation.

This nation was divided intoseven tribes: Oglala’s, Brule’, Minneconjou, Hunkpapa, No Bow, Two Kettle, and the Blackfoot. Of these tribes they had differentband. The Hunkpatila was one band of the Oglala’s . One of the greatest war chiefs of all times came from thisband. His name was Crazy Horse. Crazy Horse was not given this name, on his birth date inthe fall of 1841. He was born of his father, Crazy Horse anOglala holy man, and his mother a sister of a Brule’ warrior, Spotted Tail.

As the boy grew older his hair was wavy so his people gave him the nickname of Curly . He was togo by Curly until the summer of 1858, after a battle with theArapaho’s. Curly’s brave charged against the Arapaho’s led hisfather to give Curly the name Crazy Horse. This was the name ofhis father and of many fathers before him .

In the 1850’s, the country where the Sioux Nation lived, wasbeing invaded by the white settlers. This was upsetting for manyof the tribes. They did not understand the ways of the whites. When the whites tore into the land with plows and hunted thesacred buffalo just for the hides this went against the moraleand religious beliefs of the Sioux. The white government began tobuild forts. In 1851, Fort Laramie was built along the NorthPlatte river in Sioux territory .

In 1851, the settlers began complaining of the Indians who would not allow them to go where they wanted. U. S. Agents drew upa treaty that required the Indians to give safe passage to thewhite settlers along the Oregon Trail. In return the governmentpromised yearly supplies of guns, ammunition, flour, sugar, coffee, tobacco, blankets, and bacon. These supplies were to be provided for fifty-five years. Ten thousand Sioux gathered at thefort to listen to the words of the white government and to beshowered with gifts. In addition the treaty wanted the Indians toallow all settlers to cross their lands.

They were to divide theplains into separate territories and each tribe was not to crossthe border of their territory. The treaty also wanted no wars tobe waged on other tribes. They wanted each Indian nation tochoose a leader that would speak for the entire nation.

ManyIndians did not like this treaty and only after weeks of briberydid the whites finally convince a sizable group of leaders to sign. The Oglala’s were among those who refused (Matthiessen 6). This Treaty however did not stop the trouble between theIndians and the settlers. The Indians however, did not causeviolent trouble, they would perhaps approach a covered wagon totrade or extract gifts of food. The most daring warrior might make away with a metal pot or pan but nothing violent like thebooks and movies lead us to believe . The straw that broke the camels back took place on August17, 1854 when the relations between the Indians and Whites wereshattered.

Among the settlers heading west was a group of Mormonsand as they were passing, a few miles south of Fort Laramie, anIndian stole a cow. The Mormons reported this to Lieutenant HughB. Fleming, the commander of the post. Fleming demanded that theoffender, High Forehead of the Minneconjou, face charges. ChiefConquering Bear suggested that the Mormons come to his herd of ponies and pick out the best pony he had to replace the cow, which to the Sioux these ponies were their wealth.

This seemed tobe a very gracious offer. Fleming would not agree and sentLieutenant John L. Grattan to bring back the warrior. WhenGrattan arrived at Conquering Bears camp, he was given anotheroffer. This time they could choose five ponies from five herdsamong the tribes. Grattan refused and began to open fire.

This outrageous act of war was not calledfor. The Mormons would have surely been satisfied with the poniesor the money the ponies would have bought. The government justdid not want to keep the Indian-White relationship peaceful. Crazy Horse, then called Curly, was only thirteen when thesoldiers and the Indians fought.

The Indians outnumbered the soldiers and won the battle. Crazy Horse eventually became a leader of his people. Intoday’s society our leaders are given money and gifts but in thetimes of Crazy Horse it was almost the opposite. He was expectedto live modestly, keep only what he needed and give away therest.

After hunting he would give the needy the choicest meat andkeep the stringy meat for himself. He did however, have the honorand prestige that allowed him to make the decisions for the tribe. As well as other Sioux leaders, Crazy Horse lead his peopleinto the Powder River country. The reason for this move was toleave behind the ways of the white man and continue living theways of the Sioux. The white man had brought to their countrysickness, liquor and damaging lifestyles much different from thelifestyles of the Sioux. In 1865, U. S. officials wanted to obtain land from theIndians.

They offered many different bribes, such as gifts andliquor, to the Indians who lived around the forts. They were very good at making the sell of land seem temporary and they convincedmany that what the right thing to do was sell. The land theywanted was access land into the Powder River country. Thegovernment did not have the luck they needed in obtaining theland with money or bribes. So in the summer of 1865 they sentmore than two thousand soldiers from Fort Laramie into the PowderRiver country. In 1866 the government, knowing that the land they wantedwas worth much more, offered the Sioux fifteen thousand dollarsannually for access into Powder River country. The Indians didallow whites to use the Bozeman Trail just as they allowedimmigrants to use the Holy Road.

The U. S. Government had an obligation to protect its citizens but not to provoke a crisis.

They did create a crisis when they established forts in the heartof Oglala territory. After conquering the confederates the U. S. Army was full of optimism and wanted desperately to have an allout war to exterminate the Sioux. Although the Indians wereallowing the whites to use the Bozeman Trail, the government wasnot satisfied. They wanted the legal right to use the trail. E.

B. Taylor, a government agent at one of the Indian Offices, tricked some of the Indian Leaders into going to Fort Laramie in1866 for a treaty. He deliberately attempted to deceive them; hesaid nothing about building forts along the trail, only that theywanted to use the Bozeman Trail. He offered them guns, ammunition, gifts plus money.

The Indians did not sell (Ambrose213-214). In June 1867, the government officials produced a newtreaty. This treaty, like all the ones before, only promisedlavish gifts to those who would sign. One of the Oglala chiefs, Red Cloud, wanted more for his nation than the simple giftsoffered. He wanted the troops to move from the forts; Reno, Philkearny and C. F. Smith.

During the summer of 1868 his requestwas accepted. The troops moved. A civil war hero William TecumsehSherman moved into the territory as the new commander of the plains. He had plans to get the treaty signed. His hopes were to, shut up the congressional critics, get the Sioux to agree on atreaty and maintain the army’s morale. After negotiations weremade Red Cloud lead one hundred-and twenty-five leaders of theSioux nations to sign the treaty of 1868.

This treaty guaranteed absolute and undisturbed use of the Great Sioux Reservation. Noperson shall ever be permitted to pass over, settle upon, orreside in territory described in this article, or withoutconsent of the Indians pass through the same (Matthiessen 7-8). This treaty also stated that the hunting rights on the landbetween the Black Hills and the Big Horn Mountains as long asthe grass shall grow and the water flows.(Guttmacher 73). Itforced the Indians to be farmers and live in houses. There couldbe no changes made to the treaty without three fourths of alladult males of the Sioux nation agreeing (Ambrose 282). The Indians had divided into those who agreed with thetreaty, the friendly and those who wanted nothing to do withthe treaty, the hostile.

The U. S. government did not recognizethese separate groups. They forbid trade with the Powder RiverIndians until all Indians moved to the reservation. This was notin the Treaty of 1868, (Guttmacher 76).

Even though the government was getting the best part of thetreaty they were not satisfied with progress. In 1871 the IndianAppropriation Bill was passed which stated hereafter no Indiannation or tribe within the United States shall be acknowledgedor recognized as an independent nation, tribe or power with whomthe U. S. may contract by treaty (Matthiessen 7-8). General Armstrong Custer was appointed as the new commanderof the plains. He led the Seventh Calvary on a mission to subduea band of hostile Cheyenne.

The calvary came across an Indianvillage and attacked them instead. Black Kettle, the chief of thevillage and his wife were killed as they rode to surrender. Thiskilling of 100 Cheyenne, mostly women and children, and 800ponies was advertised as Custer’s victory against the brutalsavages (Guttmacher 81-82). The U.

S. Army led an expedition into the Sioux territory. According to the Treaty of 1868 this expedition was not legal.

The expedition was to survey land for the Northern PacificRailroad. The railroad meant progress. (Guttmacher 81).

Since the civil war the American economy was booming. Railroad stocks led the way. On, September 18 1873, bankingcrashed. Farm prices plummeted, grasshopper plaques ruined crops, yellow fever struck in the Mississippi Valley, and unemploymentwent sky high. The government figured that it’s role was to pourmoney into the economy. The gold supply was insufficient. President Grants solution to the economy was to open newterritory for exploration.

So in the spring of 1874 troops weresent to open a fort in the Black Hills. The government, exaggerated at the best or lied at the worst, said the Indianswere not keeping up their part of the treaty. Custer was incharge of this expedition.

During this expedition Custer claimedthat there was gold in the Black Hills. Grant looked at this asan opportunity to show the country he could pull them from thedepression and he opened the Black Hills for prospecting. Thisbroke the treaty of 1868 again (Ambrose 343-346). The Black Hillswas a sacred place to the Sioux. It was a place where spiritsdwelled, a holy place called Pa Sapa by the Sioux. The whites hadonly the crudest concept of what the hills meant to the Indians. By 1876 ten thousand whites lived in Custer City, the frontiertown of the southern Black Hills. Agency Indians were not livingvery well on the reservations.

Government agents were corrupt. They would accept diseased cattle, rotten flour and wormy corn. They would get a kickback on the profits. The Indians wereundernourished and even starving. The agents also claimed theIndians exaggerated in their numbers just to receive morerations.

However, in a census conducted by the government tryingto prove this, they found that the Indians were actually claimingless (Ambrose 359). In 1876, the agencies were taken from the churches and givento the army to control. This was petitioned to Washington with statements that soldiers were obnoxious and their dislike forIndians was very obvious. Also the army was corrupting theIndians by introducing and encouraging alcohol and gambling. Thepetition also stated that all the agency troubles had been causeddirectly or indirectly by the soldiers. No change in policy wasdone on behalf of these petitions (Kadlecek 33). Unwilling to pay for the Black Hills and unable to defeatthe Sioux in war, on August, 15, 1876 Congress passed the SiouxAppropriation Bill.

This bill stated that further provisionswould not be given to the Sioux until the hostiles gave up theBlack Hills, Powder River country and Bighorn country. They wouldalso have to move to the Missouri River in Central Dakota or toOklahoma. Upset because of there defeat the Government demandedunconditional surrender of the Sioux or they would starve thosein the agencies.

Red Cloud and the other chiefs were told to signa treaty or their people would starve. Crazy horse and SittingBull continued to fight for land that was stolen from them in amisleading treaty (Ambrose 417-418). The Treaty of 1876 was notsigned by at least three fourths of the male members of the Sioux nation as the Treaty of 1868 had stipulated. So they cheated bycalling the treaty an Agreement instead of a treaty.

The government had changed or disturbed nearly every part ofthe Indians lives. They had taken their horses (their wealth), taken their land, taken the buffalo and taken their tipis. Theystill had their religion. They had seven ceremonial rites ofwhich two were the most beneficial; the Vision Quest and the SunDance. The Vision quest was an individual dance and the Sun Dancea community affair. In June 1877 the biggest Sun Dance seen onthe reservation, twenty thousand strong, was held to honor CrazyHorse. This was the last big Sun Dance (Kadlecek 37-42).

Crazy Horse was finally persuaded to bring his people in tolive on the reservation. Crazy horse was lied to when agovernment official told him that he was needed at a conference. He realized this was a trap when he saw bars on the windows. Hedrew his knife and attempted to break loose. A white soldier, William Gentiles, lunged at Crazy Horse with a fixed bayonet thatpunctured his kidney. Crazy Horse died September, 5 1877. The Sioux Indians had lost nearly everything that made thema strong nation. In 1881 the government prohibited allreservations from allowing the Sun Dance.

The government went against the First Amendment and took away the Sioux’s greatestreligious ceremony. General Sherman, never known as an Indianlover, said a reservation was a parcel of land inhabited byIndians and surrounded by thieves (Matthiessen 17). This type ofharassment did not stop. In 1887 the General Allotment Act (theDawes Act) was passed. This Act was designed to assist the Indians to mainstream into America. Each male Indian was given160 acres of land from the reservation. Of course the excess landwas taken by the government and sold to the whites. The Indianswere not accustom to dealing with thieves and the majorityof them lost their land through shady dealings.

The U. S. Government used many deceptions to obtain the landthe Indians once owned. The Sioux Indians were not treated withthe most respect to say the least. They must be commended forstaying strong and still being a big part of the United Statestoday. BibliographyDebo, Angie. History of the Indians of the US.

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