

The Battle of the Little Bighorn, 1876

In late 1875, Sioux and Cheyenne Indians were angered at the whites travelling into their **sacred lands in the Black Hills**. The discovery of **Gold** had seen many miners entering the sacred land in the search for Gold. The US Government had promised Red Cloud that white settlers would not be allowed to settle here. This was part of the **Fort Laramie Treaty**.



The Sioux gathered with **Sitting Bull** to fight for their lands.

To force the large Indian army back to the reservations, the Army sent **Lt. Colonel George Custer** and the Seventh Cavalry.

Spotting the Sioux village about fifteen miles away along the **Rosebud River on June 25**, Custer also found a nearby group of about forty warriors.

Ignoring orders to wait, he decided to attack before they could alert the main party.

He did not realize that the number of warriors in the village numbered **three times** his strength.

Dividing his forces in three, Custer sent troops under Captain Frederick Benteen to prevent their escape through the upper valley of the **Little Bighorn River**.

Major Marcus Reno was to chase the group, cross the river, and charge the Indian village.

Cheyenne and Hunkpapa Sioux together crossed the river and slammed into the advancing soldiers, forcing them back

Meanwhile, another force, largely Oglala Sioux under **Crazy Horse's** command, surrounded Custer and his men in a pincer move. They began pouring in gunfire and arrows.

As the Indians closed in, Custer ordered his men to shoot their horses and stack the carcasses to form a wall, but they provided little protection against bullets.

In less than an hour, Custer and his men were killed in the worst American military disaster ever.

After another day's fighting, Reno and Benteen's now united forces escaped when the Indians broke off the fight. They had learned that the other two columns of soldiers were coming towards them, so they fled.



Sitting Bull

Little Bighorn showed the Indians' power. They had achieved their **greatest victory** yet, but soon the tribes union fell apart in the face of the white onslaught.

Outraged over the death of a popular Civil War hero the nation demanded retribution. The Black Hills dispute was quickly settled by redrawing the boundary lines, placing the Black Hills outside the reservation and open to white settlement.

Within a year, the Sioux nation was defeated and broken. "Custer's Last Stand" was their last stand as well.



Red Cloud



Sitting Bull



Battle of the Little Bighorn



Custer



Crazy Horse