

Module 6: A Nation Grows - 1877 to the 1900s

Topic 1 Content: American Indian Wars Notes

American Indian Wars

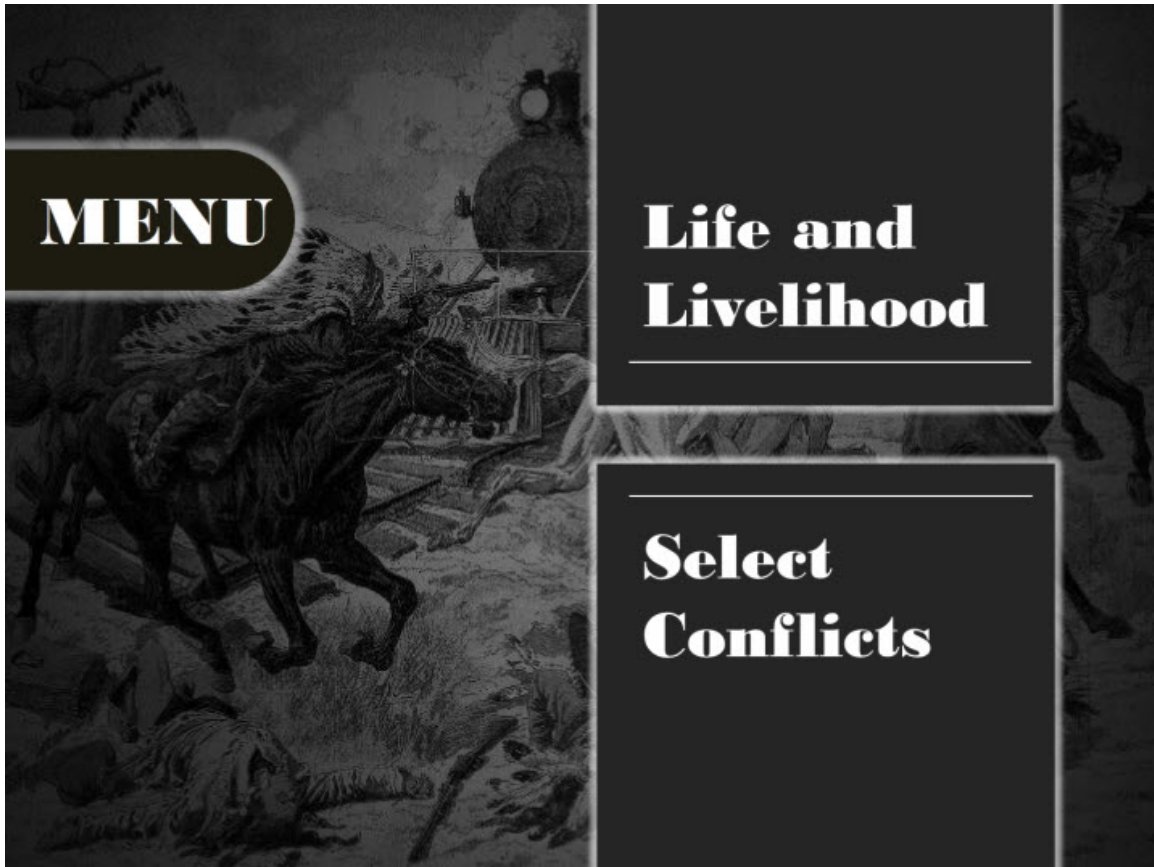


American Indian Wars

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Menu



Since people first started settling in the United States in Jamestown until 1924, American Indians and American settlers experienced conflicts with each other. An outbreak of conflicts occurred as settlers migrated westward past the Mississippi River. These conflicts disrupted the lives and livelihood of the American Indians.

Click each of the menu items to learn about the lives and livelihood of the American Indians and select conflicts that occurred during the American Indian Wars.

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Book Cover

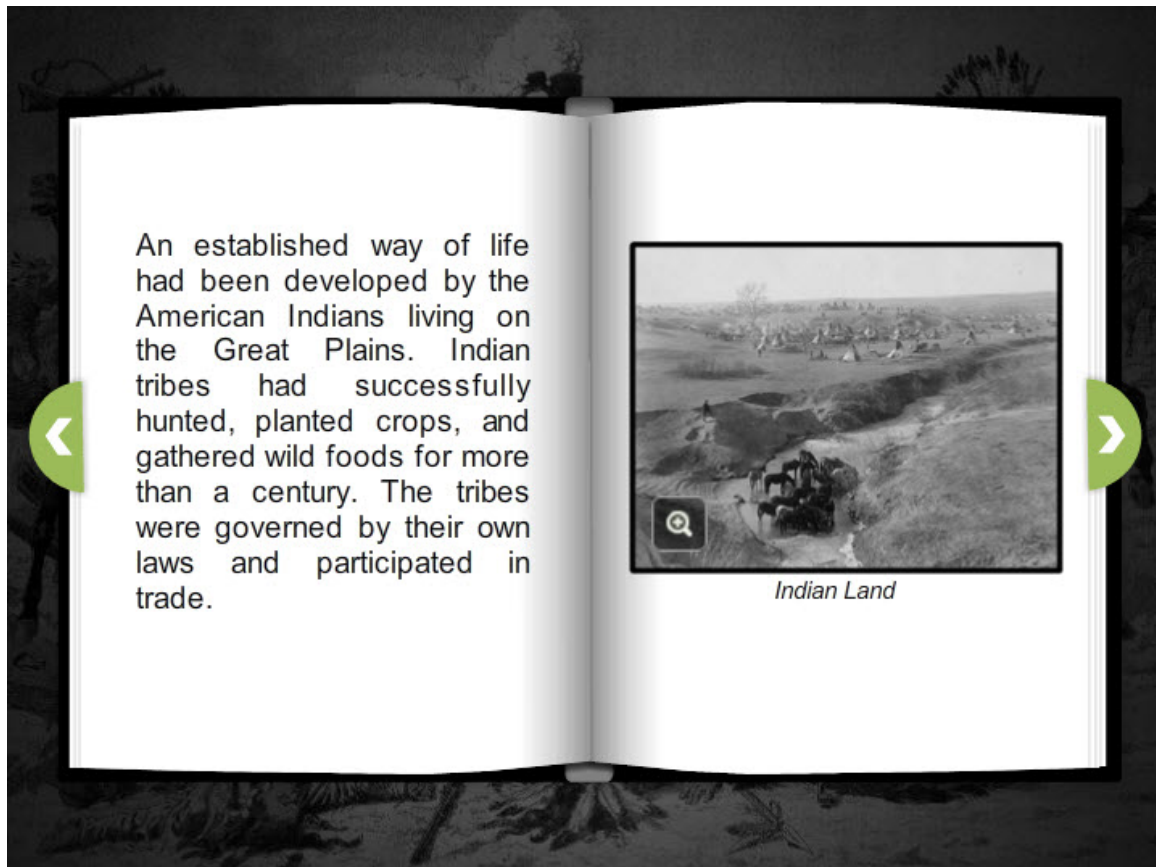


Click the green tabs to move through the book and to learn about the life and livelihood of the American Indians on the Great Plains. Once you have completed the book, click the home button to return to the main menu.

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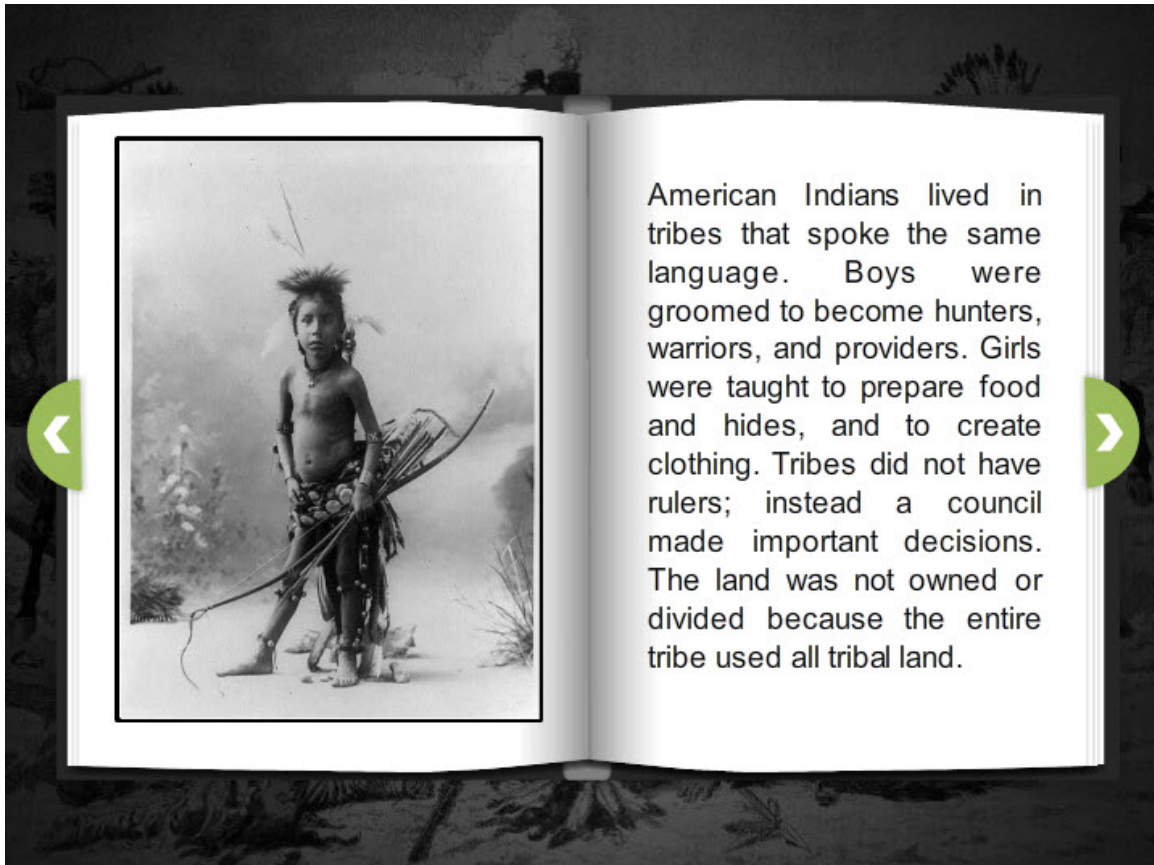


An established way of life had been developed by the American Indians living on the Great Plains. Indian tribes had successfully hunted, planted crops, and gathered wild foods for more than a century. The tribes were governed by their own laws and participated in trade.

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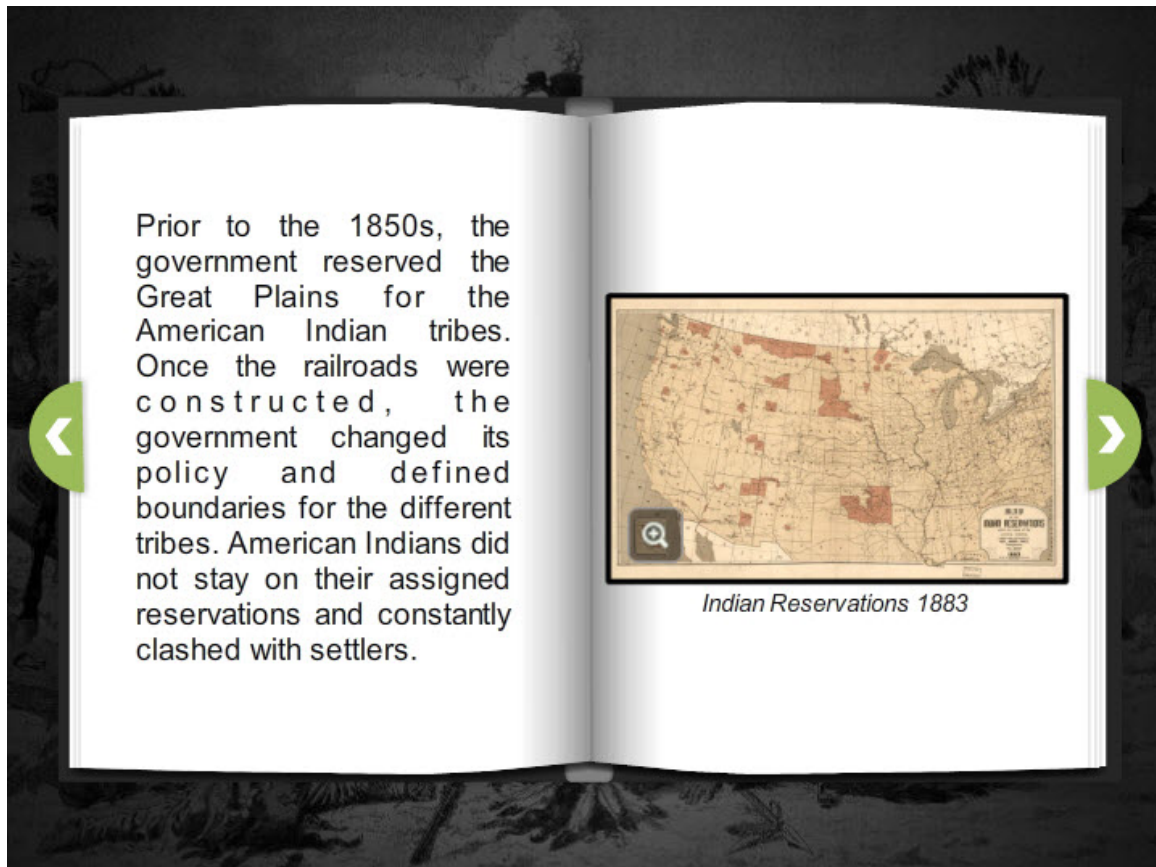


American Indians lived in tribes that spoke the same language. Boys were groomed to become hunters, warriors, and providers. Girls were taught to prepare food and hides, and to create clothing. Tribes did not have rulers; instead a council made important decisions. The land was not owned or divided because the entire tribe used all tribal land.

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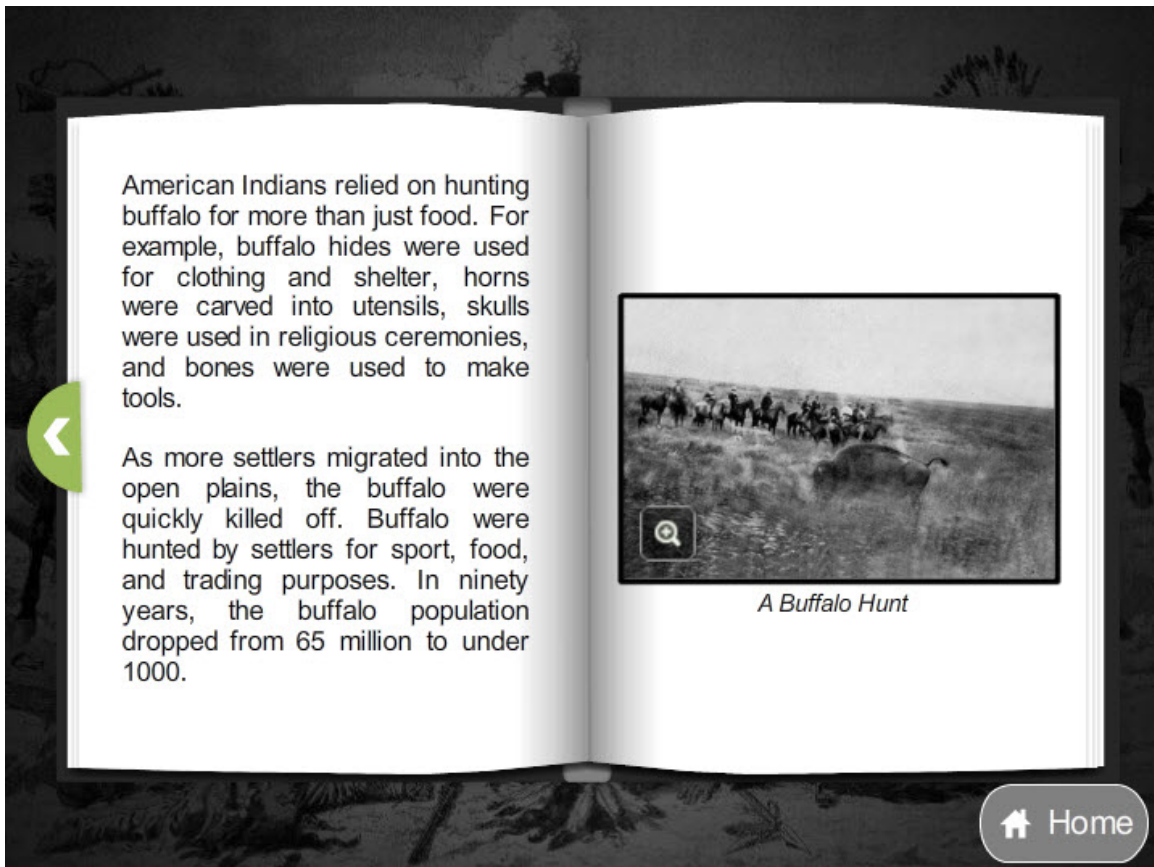


Prior to the 1850s, the government reserved the Great Plains for the American Indian tribes. Once the railroads were constructed, the government changed its policy and defined boundaries for the different tribes. American Indians did not stay on their assigned reservations and constantly clashed with settlers.

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American Indians relied on hunting buffalo for more than just food. For example, buffalo hides were used for clothing and shelter, horns were carved into utensils, skulls were used in religious ceremonies, and bones were used to make tools.

As more settlers migrated into the open plains, the buffalo were quickly killed off. Buffalo were hunted by settlers for sport, food, and trading purposes. In ninety years, the buffalo population dropped from 65 million to under 1000.



A Buffalo Hunt

Home

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Select Conflicts



Select conflicts during the American Indian Wars

1864 1866 1874 1876 1890

Click each of the events in the timeline to learn more about select conflicts that occurred during the American Indian Wars.


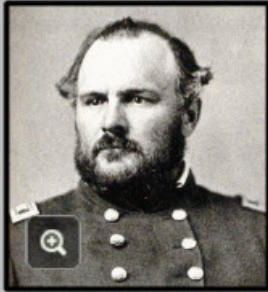
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Sand Creek

In 1864, the Cheyenne returned to Colorado's Sand Creek Reserve. Wanting the Cheyenne Indians to suffer, U.S. Army Commander General S. R. Curtis ordered Colonel John Chivington to attack the Cheyenne and Arapaho. Unprepared, American Indians were caught off-guard and massacred. An estimated 200 warriors and 500 women and children were killed.



John Chivington

Cheyenne Chiefs


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Bozeman Trail

In 1866, conflicts continued in Montana and Wyoming within proximity of the Bozeman Trail. The Bozeman Trail connected the gold mining territory in Montana with the Oregon Trail. The Bozeman Trail ran directly through Sioux hunting grounds. To end the conflicts, the government agreed to close the Bozeman Trail if the Sioux agreed to live in a reservation along the Missouri River. This was presented to the Sioux as the Treaty of Fort Laramie. Sitting Bull, one of the Sioux tribe leaders, refused to sign the treaty and continued to hunt on the same land. The treaty stopped the conflict for a short period of time, but as more settlers migrated westward, the conflicts began again.



Map of the Bozeman Trail



Sitting Bull

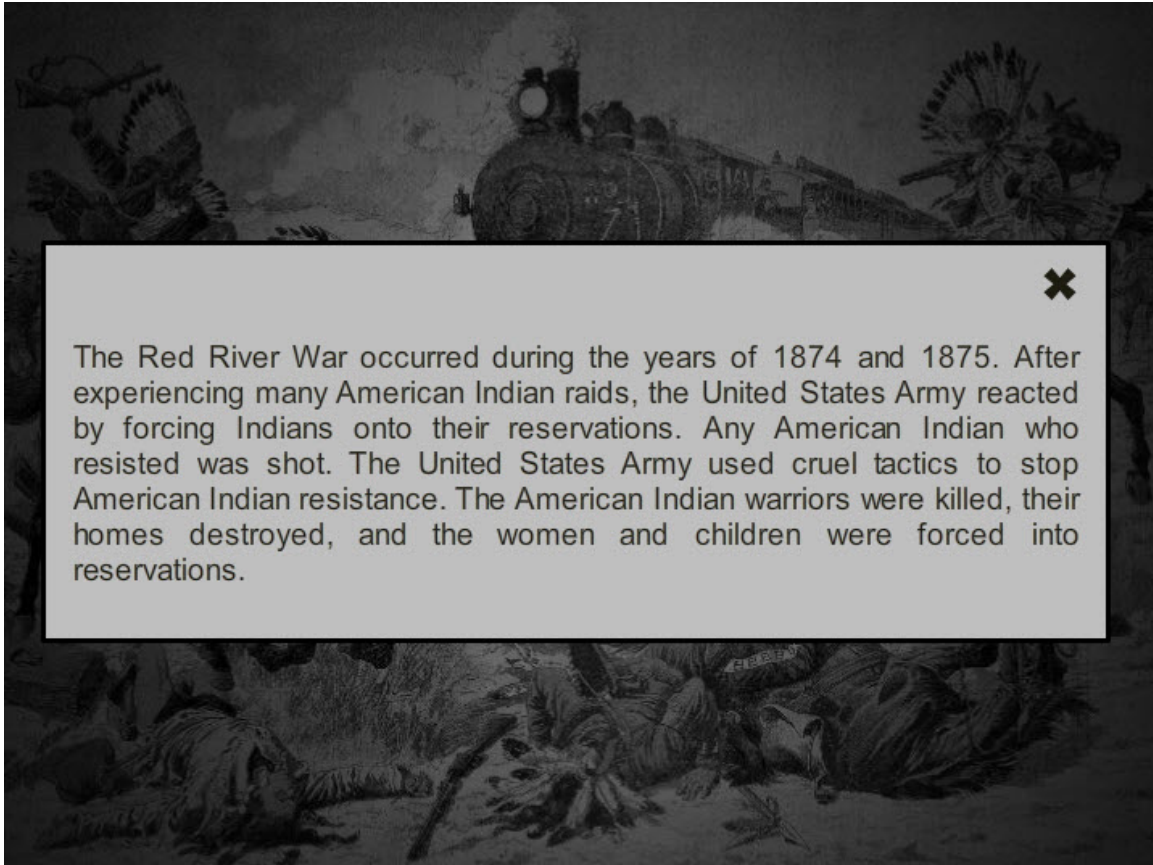
The image contains a text block at the top, a map of the Bozeman Trail in the bottom left, and a portrait of Sitting Bull in the bottom right. The text describes the historical context of the Bozeman Trail and the Treaty of Fort Laramie. The map shows the trail's path through Montana and Wyoming. The portrait shows Sitting Bull in traditional attire.

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Red River



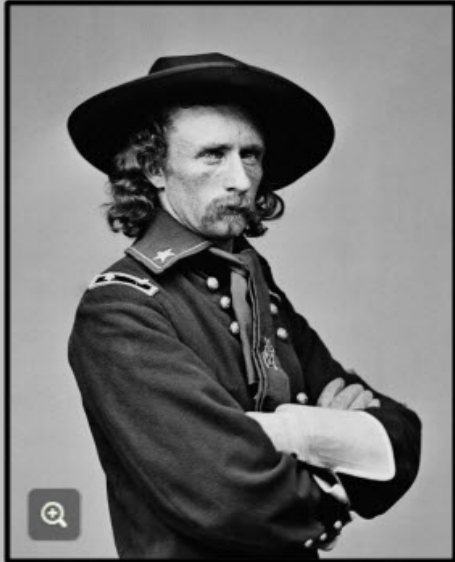
The Red River War occurred during the years of 1874 and 1875. After experiencing many American Indian raids, the United States Army reacted by forcing Indians onto their reservations. Any American Indian who resisted was shot. The United States Army used cruel tactics to stop American Indian resistance. The American Indian warriors were killed, their homes destroyed, and the women and children were forced into reservations.

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Custer's Last Stand

Four years after the signing of the Treaty of Fort Laramie, the gold rush into the Black Hills of South Dakota returned. Although the American Indian tribes protested the gold rush, Colonel George A. Custer reported that the Black Hills were filled with gold and persisted. Angered, the leaders of the American Indian tribes, Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, and Gall, attacked Custer's troops. All of Custer's troops, including Custer himself, were killed. By 1876, the Sioux were defeated and Sitting Bull surrendered.



General George Custer

The image is a black and white portrait of General George A. Custer. He is shown from the chest up, wearing a dark military uniform with a high collar and epaulettes. He has a mustache and is wearing a wide-brimmed hat. His arms are crossed, and he is looking slightly to the right of the camera. The portrait is set within a rectangular frame that has a magnifying glass icon in the bottom-left corner and a close button (an 'X') in the top-right corner.

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Battle of Wounded Knee

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The Sioux continued to live in the United States, but without their traditional hunting grounds, they suffered from poverty and disease. In December of 1890, the United States Army forced the remaining Sioux into the Wounded Knee Creek Reservation in South Dakota. Armed with several large Hotchkiss Guns, the United States Army demanded that all Sioux hand over their weapons. When they refused, the Army slaughtered as many as 300 Sioux. Instead of burying the dead, the soldiers left them on the ground to freeze.



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Three days after the Battle of Wounded Knee

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