

## **Sitting Bull**

Sitting Bull was a Lakota medicine man and war chief. He was born sometime around 1831 near Grand River, South Dakota. He was given the name Tatanka-lyotanka, which is translated to a bull sitting on its haunches. From an early age, Sitting Bull was a fearsome warrior. According to legend, he participated in his first battle at the age of 14, when he joined a party that raided a Crow village. In 1864, Sitting Bull participated in the Battle of Killdeer Mountain, a battle which crushed much of the Lakota resistance to U.S. military forces in the upper Great Plains. Despite the setback, Sitting Bull refused to surrender and live on a reservation and led a successful attack against the newly built Fort Rice in North Dakota in 1865. Sitting Bull's bravery and refusal to surrender to the Government earned him the title of head chief of the Lakota Nation in 1868.

In the 1870's, Sitting Bull began an effort to unite the various nations of the Great Plains against the rising tide of White settlement in the region. Sitting Bull first tried a peaceful approach to dealing with the White settlers, but the settlers increasingly tricked the Lakota people into making bad land and food deals. After gold was discovered in the Black Hills, a Lakota holy place, Sitting Bull refused to move to reservations designated by the U.S. Government. Instead, he led a group of warriors to take up arms against the settlers and miners.

In June of 1876, 3,000 Indian warriors under the command of Sitting Bull repelled an attack by the 7th Cavalry under the command of George Custer at Little Big Horn River, Montana. Sitting Bull's warriors then launched a brutal counterattack on the cavalry that resulted in the deaths of virtually every American soldier in the cavalry. The event came to be known as Custer's Last Stand and is probably the most famous battle that took place between the U.S. Government and Native Americans. After the battle, U.S. forces accumulated in the region and forced many in the Lakota tribe to relocate to reservations. Sitting Bull, however, refused and led a group of Lakota Indians into Saskatchewan, Canada. He refused to return to the United States, even though he was issued a pardon. He was eventually forced to surrender, however, in 1881 because of cold and hunger. He was imprisoned for a short time before being sent to a reservation to live.

In 1885, Sitting Bull was permitted to leave the reservation to join a traveling show called "Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show." The show would tour the country and Sitting Bull would ride around the arena shouting curse words at the audience in his native language. Sitting Bull left the show after a couple of months and began earning an income from selling his autographed picture. By 1890, Sitting Bull returned to his Indian roots and joined the "Ghost Dancers," a large Indian movement involving a "Ghost Dance," which the participants believed would make them impervious to bullets. The movement quickly gained strength and the U.S. Government began to fear a large rebellion. In an attempt to stop the dancing, the Government tried to arrest Sitting Bull, who they thought was encouraging the practice. When his Sioux brethren tried to interfere in the arrest, gunshots were fired, one of which killed Sitting Bull and another one hit his son, Crow Foot.

Today, Sitting Bull is remembered as one of the greatest figures in Lakota history. He is supposedly buried at Fort Yates, North Dakota, but some in the Lakota tribe claim his remains have been transported to a holy site in South Dakota.

**1. What happened at the Battle of Killdeer Mountain?**

- A. The Lakota people crushed resistance from American military forces
- B. American military forces crushed the Lakota resistance
- C. Sitting Bull led the Lakota people to victory
- D. Sitting Bull was forced to surrender because his people were starving

**2. How did Sitting Bull become head chief of the Lakota nation?**

- A. Sitting Bull led peaceful negotiations with the United States Government
- B. Sitting Bull refused to surrender to the United States Government
- C. Sitting Bull won many battles against the American military
- D. Sitting Bull defeated General Custer

**3. Why did Sitting Bull make the decision to take up arms against the White settlers and miners?**

- A. Gold was discovered in Lakota lands
- B. The United States government tried to force the Lakota people to move to reservations
- C. The settlers had tricked the Lakota into making bad deals
- D. All of the above

**4. Custer's Last Stand...**

- A. was a brutal victory for the United States military.
- B. occurred in 1881.
- C. occurred in Saskatchewan, Canada.
- D. was a famous victory for the Lakota.

**5. What happened after Sitting Bull was forced to surrender?**

- A. He led his people to Saskatchewan, Canada
- B. The Lakota people defeated the American military at Little Big Horn Creek
- C. Sitting Bull made money from selling autographed pictures
- D. Gold was found on Lakota land

**6. Which of the following is NOT true?**

- A. The Black Hills was a sacred Lakota place
- B. After Sitting Bull surrendered, he was imprisoned
- C. Sitting Bull tried to discourage the Ghost Dancers
- D. Some Lakota claim that Sitting Bull is buried in South Dakota

**7. What question is NOT answered in the passage?**

- A. Did Crow Foot die when he was hit by a bullet?
- B. What did Sitting Bull do in "Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show?"
- C. When did Sitting Bull first participate in battle?
- D. What did Sitting Bull's real name mean?