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**ŽIVOT A DOBA VELKÉHO SIOUXSKÉHO  
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**LIFE AND TIMES OF THE GREAT SIOUX NATION**

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*V Plzni dne 15. dubna 2014*

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Michal Votřel

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The aim of my thesis is to explore the traditional way of life of the Sioux tribe and factors which influenced their life since the arrival of Europeans. The first part of the thesis explores the basic knowledge about the Sioux, the origin of their name, various terms they were/are called by the Americans and the tribal organization. The second part of my thesis explores Sioux culture and their customs. The beginning of the second part focuses on basic information about the Sioux culture and their religion. Further, the second part describes the most important ceremonies and customs within the Great Sioux Nation. The third and largest part deals with the history of the Sioux. Firstly it discusses the various possibilities of origin of the Sioux. Later on, the thesis deals with describing the initial encounters with Europeans and their first influence. Furthermore, the third chapter discusses the crucial events of the Sioux history concerning the Europeans, the factors affecting the events up until the end of nineteenth century and the impact of these events on the Sioux life and culture. Along with the events the thesis presents several important historical figures with a short description of their lives. In the end the thesis briefly deals with the twentieth century and most important events in that time.

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## **1 - Introduction**

The core of my thesis will be focused on one of Native American peoples known as the Sioux. The Sioux are one of the most well-known and one of the most important Native American tribes from a historical point of view because they were one of the largest tribes and because along with the Cheyenne the most determined tribe to preserve their traditional culture and homelands from the European influence. They mostly inhabited South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, Montana, but as the Europeans invaded the new continent the Sioux were forced to move across the contemporary North America. Approximately the first half of my thesis provides a description of the Sioux as a tribe. I am going to start with a brief introduction of the Sioux, their tribal organization, the origin of their name, their culture and customs. I am going to provide an introduction to the Sioux cultural life, their traditions, ceremonies, personal possessions and other relevant facts. As the Sioux have an enormous quantity of traditions and ceremonies only the most important ones will be described in detail, others will be only listed or introduced briefly. Most of the information will be given universally because the Sioux are a very complex formation of many minor tribes with slightly different customs in each tribe. Therefore it would be very hard to describe each difference on such a few pages.

The second chapter will be focused on the history of the Sioux from the prehistory up until the first encounter with the Europeans around the year of 1650. This first history part will be presented shortly as the prehistory does not have many sources to gain information from, only oral sources. The second half of the history will be focused on the initial encounters with the Europeans and the relations with them. Some of the most



important matters will be discussed in my thesis such as a fur trade with the Europeans. The thesis will continue with the facts and the description of the wars between the Sioux and the Europeans. The main focus will be given on the most important event of the Indian wars from the Sioux relevant point of view, which was the battle of the Little Bighorn, which took place in 1876. The knowledge about the battle will be provided with general information about the main figures of the struggle between the Sioux and the Europeans, for example Sitting Bull, George Armstrong Custer, Red Cloud and Crazy Horse.

The third and last chapter will provide a connection from history to contemporary situation of the Sioux nation. This will be done by describing the first Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890, which is considered to be the end of the Indian Wars. The thesis will connect the massacre of 1890 and the Wounded Knee incident of 1973. After the description of the incident, the thesis will present the contemporary issues of the Sioux in the United States. General knowledge of their present reservations will be given at the end of the chapter three and also about their current life and rights inside the American society.

The thesis explores the influence and the impact on the Sioux traditional culture and life caused by the arrival of Europeans and their westward expansion.

After the thesis itself I will provide appendixes which will include mostly pictures important for the thesis. I will, for example, provide few maps showing historical and current geographical positions of the Sioux or the map of the battle of Little Bighorn.

## 2 - The Great Sioux Nation

### 2.1 Basic knowledge

The Sioux are one of the Native American or American Indian peoples, usually referred to as Indians nowadays. They are one of the first aboriginal Nations of North America. The term Indian was invented when Christopher Columbus firstly encountered the aboriginal people of the discovered continent in 1492. Willton (2004) describes the origin of the term Indian as following: "..., the word "Indian" comes from Columbus's description of the people he found here. He was an Italian, and did not speak or write very good Spanish, so in his written accounts he called the Indians, "Una gente in Dios". A people in God. In God. In Dios. Indians. It's a perfectly noble and respectable word." (p.163)

The term Indian is a very disputable appellation when it comes to political correctness. Although people might think it is offensive to American Indian people, a survey done in 1995 showed that most American Indian tribes do not find it offensive and do not mind being called that way. Nevertheless, as Gaffney (2006) argues in his article: "... the Native peoples of North America are incredibly diverse. It would be like referring to both a Romanian and an Irishman as European." Therefore the most suitable possibility to call any member of any Native American tribe is by their tribal membership, for instance: the Sioux, the Cheyenne, the Cree, and so on... However this possibility is not very feasible because of the large diversity of the tribes and therefore it is very hard to be able to recognize to which tribe one belongs. (retrieved from: [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow/fts/bismarck\\_200504A16.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow/fts/bismarck_200504A16.html)).

The name "Sioux" comes from the seventeenth century and it was given them by European settlers, in most historical books the French are mentioned as the ones who started calling them that. The word "Sioux" is an abbreviated word. I have come across two possible spellings of the original word, but I am sure these are not the only options. The two possibilities I explored are: "Naudoweissious" and "Nadewasiou". They are very similar in the spelling but they have different meanings in translation. The first one is translated as "people of an alien tribe", and the second one as "little poisonous snakes". Both the spellings and the translations are based on reading Gibbon (2003) and Cagnon (2011). Later in the past contemporary Americans of that time abbreviated the original word and simply called the people of the nation the Sioux.

## **2.2 The Seven Council Fires and the division of the Sioux**

The term Sioux includes every ethnic group within the Great Sioux Nation. As Cagnon (2011) states: "All of the Sioux recognize that they are part of a single mythic nation, the Oceti Sakowin (Seven Council Fires)." (p.5)

Each fire symbolizes each tribe within the Great Sioux Nation. All of the Seven Council Fires gathered each year to hold a council, discuss tribal matters and honor the gods in the Sun Dance, a ceremony which will be described further in the thesis. Despite the differences amongst each of the seven tribes and the fact that they were widely geographically spread across the America, this annual event was something as a rule so the tribes would remember the fact that they are still part of one big culture. The meeting had another important role in the Sioux society. Every year, the Sioux chose four leaders out of the seven chiefs of each tribe, who had the power to decide matters and events

involving the whole Sioux nation. Being chosen was considered to be the highest honor for a member of the tribe.

The Sioux comprise of three major divisions, which are based on dialects and subculture (Cagnon, 2011):

1. Dakota/Santee – this is the eastern division of the Sioux who set their homeland in southern Minnesota and western Wisconsin. Their lifestyle was focused on hunting, some farming, fishing and fur trade and living in woodlands. The word “Dakota” bears the meaning of a friend or an ally depending on the content of use.
2. Dakota/Yankton and Yanktonai – The two tribes Yankton and Yanktonai were formal members of the Dakota division, however they diverged and settle themselves in the areas of southeastern South Dakota, northwestern Iowa, and southwestern Minnesota. The reason for diverging the Dakota division was to make an easier access to the fur trade with Europeans. This is the middle division of the Sioux.
3. Lakota/Teton – the last of the three major divisions of the Sioux. The numbers of the Lakota were more numerous than of those of both Dakota divisions combined. They were the western division of the Nation. They made their borders on the Big Horn Mountains in the west, the Canadian border in the north, the Platte River in the south, and the Missouri River in the east. The Lakota division is well-known for being a typical example of plains Indians. In this division, two well-known minor tribes can be found and they are the Oglala and the Hunkpapa. Many others minor tribes belonged to this division.

When all of the three divisions are put together, they still do not form only the Sioux Nation, but also the above mentioned *Oceti Sakowin*. The word “fire” in Sioux language possesses the meaning of the word “tribe”. There were seven great tribes in the Sioux Nation who formed the Seven Council Fire. Four of the “fires” were members of the Dakota/Santee and their names were: the Mdewakanton, Wahpeton, Wahpekute, and Sisseton. Two “fires” were members the Dakota/Yankton and Yanktonai and those were of the same names as the name of the division, the Yankton and the Yanktonai. The last council “fire” was a part of the Lakota/Teton with the same name of the “fire” as that of the division, the Lakota.

Historically the Sioux were not always divided in this manner. They used to be a single nation once without any differences amongst themselves. But this union ended in the 1500’s, when they started to spread to different parts of the country and differentiated one tribe from another, especially from the economical point of view and later on each tribe has its own dialect. Still all the Sioux were able to communicate amongst themselves.

Europeans referred to the Sioux as one nation and did not recognize their internal divisions. In order for the Europeans to distinguish various Indians nations they institutionalized the name “Sioux” as a designation to a group now identified as “Algonquian Indians”. This term included every tribe that spoke the Algonquian language. The Sioux were for the settlers one tribal nation, the divisions differ as Cagnon (2011) states: “These “Sioux” were as distinct from one another as the English, Australians, and Americans are today, perhaps more so, because each had a different economy. “ (p.2)

### **3 - Culture**

#### **3.1 Introduction to the Sioux culture**

The Sioux are commonly known for being passionate observers of tribal traditions and ceremonies. The core of the culture of each tribe within the Great Sioux Nation is the same but it varies with each tribe, hence each tribe possesses its own specific culture. The culture of the Sioux is very special one, because it is closely bound to their religion. The Sioux strongly believe in supernatural Beings (the Sun, The Earth, etc...) who created life on Earth and base their religion on this thesis. But the Sioux culture is not only their own but as Cagnon (2011) states: "Sioux culture often has adopted beliefs, ceremonies, and narratives from other cultures as well as interchanging them among the Sioux tribes themselves." (p.74)

What Cagnon implies is that the Sioux were not affected only by other Indians of North America but also by Europeans later in the nineteenth and twentieth century. The times before the Europeans began to influence their culture are called "traditional times". We talk especially about the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in those times the culture of the Sioux flourished and was without any influence of the white men. The impact of Europeans on the Sioux culture is crucial, in my opinion. Because it affected all parts of their life: religion, customs, traditions, tribal organization and way of life.

There are many special and important traditions, ceremonies and material objects that hold great meaning to all tribes of the Sioux Nation and are closely related to their religion and beliefs. These ranged from animals and weapons to ceremonies and special dances. (Tribal ceremonies weren't just important for the Sioux but to other tribes in the Great Plain region, many with similar beliefs.)

Cagnon (2011) describes the core of the Sioux beliefs as following: “Sioux basic beliefs are derived from the revelations of supernatural Beings to the people through direct teachings and dreams.” (p.77)

The most important beliefs among the Sioux are the "Great Spirit" (*Wakan Tanka*) and the “White Buffalo Calf Woman”. The Great Spirit is an all-mighty spirit who rules everything and everyone: The trees, the clouds, the animals and above everything the Earth itself. The Earth even ruled all the spirits. The Sun also has much power, because of heating the Earth and giving it light.

### **3.2 White Buffalo Calf Woman**

White Buffalo Calf Woman - this powerful being holds great meaning to the Sioux. According to a legend she descended from the sky in time of need when the Sioux were starving. After four days she left the Sioux and on her way back to the Sky she changed her appearance four times in a different colored calf and led the Sioux onto a plain covered with buffalos (the whole legend can be read for instance at: <http://www.ilhawaii.net/~stony/dcmths.html>). From this time the Sioux began to call themselves the buffalo people. Cagnon (2011) describes her as following: “She taught the pipe ceremony as the most formal means of communicating with the supernatural. She also revealed all of the cultural norms that were vital to being a Sioux. She instructed women, men, and children about proper behavior and relationships with others. She revealed ceremonies, taught the Sioux to govern by consensus, explained how to respect all living things, and emphasized the reciprocal relationships of the Sioux.” (p.75)

The sacred pipe is passed on and on to following generations, more specifically to the most respected man in the tribe. Today, Chief Arvol Looking Horse, the nineteenth generation of the keepers, is the owner of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe.

### **3.3 Seven Sacred Ceremonies**

Ceremonies play also a great part in the Sioux culture and are very essential part of the religion. They would hold them for nearly everything whether the occasions were joyful or full of sorrow. Each ceremony is different. The Sioux have *The Seven Sacred Ceremonies* which are (Cagnon, 2011; retrived from: <http://www.theosophy-nw.org/theosnw/world/america/am-smit.htm>):

1. *Sweat Lodge/The Rite of Purification* – this ceremony can be held either in the beginning or at the end of a ceremony and it serves to purify one’s body and soul.
2. *Vision Seeking/Vision Quests* – I found the Vision Quest quite fascinating, therefore I have decided to pay more attention to it. This quest was an essential part of a man's life. When boys were entering adulthood a young man would cease eating and go to a lonely and quiet place on a hill or a steep place that was sacred to his people. How long he stayed alone was up to the spirits, but usually it lasted four days. It was believed that a spirit, mostly in the form of an animal, would send a vision to the young man of his future. Once it was recieved the young man would go back to his village and tell the Shaman of his vision for it to be interpreted. Afterwards the boy was given a new name relating to his vision. The Shaman, also known as the Medicine



Man was a powerful person with a lot of knowledge. He knew how to heal people of almost every sickness, decided when to hunt, tried to change the weather and foretell the future. (Vision Seeking do not have to be performed only by boys. For instance, Sitting Bull was seeking a vision prior to the Battle of the Little Bighorn.)

3. *Sun Dance* – This ceremony was held by the Teton in traditional times. They usually gathered all to one place and perform the dance around the summer solstice. The ceremony serves to allow the performer to reach *Wakan Tanka*.
4. *Hunka/The Making of Relatives* – this ceremony was helpful when reinforcing intertribal alliances, because it is a way to proclaim a nontribal person as a member of a family. *Hunka* (adoption) was also performed by elder men who, during the ceremony, took a young man under their own protection and offer him to be treated like a son.
5. *Buffalo Sing/Preparing a Girl for Womanhood* – this ceremony is not very common at present. In traditional times, it was performed when a young girl got her first menses. The ceremony was held only by the young girl and elder women who prepared her for life.
6. *Spirit-keeping Ceremony/The Keeping of the Soul* – if a family does not want to leave their recently deceased member of the family they performed the ceremony to keep his/her spirit in a certain place for a year after which he/she is released with commemorating ceremony.

7. *Throwing the Ball* – performing this ceremony the tribe gathers and the ball is passed from one member to another. The purpose is to remind that all the members are actually relatives.

### **3.4 Traditions and personal possessions**

Including The Seven Sacred Ceremonies, most ceremonies are to honor the Great Spirit, the White Buffalo Calf Woman, or the Sun. Others are, for example, as follows: naming a baby, boy's first hunt, marriage, death, etc... "Pow Wows!" are other ceremonies which should be mentioned, at least briefly. Though considered a ceremony, they really seem like celebrations. In these festive periods of time, tribe members take part in singing, dancing, feasting, praying and storytelling. Of course, there were more ceremonies, actually much more, but the mentioned are the most well-known ones.

Traditions were another great part of the cultural life of the Sioux. Amongst those are lined up traditions like: storytelling, sign language (important part in secret ambushes) and smudging (form of physical and spiritual cleansing).

There was another aspect significant for the cultural life of the Sioux. The aspect was personal possession. The Sioux, just like any average person, had belongings that meant a great deal to him. These specific items brought luck, strength and good dreams. As a tribe these possessions were a very important aspect of life. Here are examples of the possessions: pipes (used mostly in ceremonies), shield (protection of a warrior), mandella (similar to shields, those in possession were supposed to have a great deal of luck and happiness) or dream catcher (sorting out dreams, letting the good ones in and the bad ones have stuck in it).

## **4 - History**

### **4.1 Introduction to Sioux History**

The history of Native America Peoples differs from that of Europeans in the ambiguity of their origin. This thesis applies on the possibility to speak accurately and specifically about historical events, important places, figures, nations, etc... Before the new continent was invaded firstly by Vikings, then later by Spanish, French, British and other European nation, our understanding remains very vague. Most of the historical facts about the Sioux and other Indian Nations have their origin in oral traditions, which were passed on from one generation to another. This includes mainly their prehistory which ends with the first encounter with the Europeans on the turn of sixteenth and seventeenth century. The history of the Sioux can be divided into several important periods. But the division differs with every historian. For instance, Gibbon (2003) divides the Sioux history into seven time periods, beginning with the Prehistory and Ending with Self-Determination in the last three decades of the twentieth century. On the other hand, Cagnon (2011) separates the Sioux history in only five time periods. Even the demarcation of constituent time periods differs from one historian to another. Historians' opinions usually differ in a matter of what crucial event begins and ends one specific time period of the history. Only the first period seems to be demarcated the same by all historians. It begins in the Misty Past (common reference to the part of history about which not many provable facts are found) and ends in 1650, the beginning of the French and English Fur Trade.

### **4.2 The Prehistory of the Sioux**

The beginning of the Sioux arrival upon the territories of North America is uncertain, but it is dated back to approximately eight or nine thousand years BC. The origin of the Sioux differs from tribe to tribe and from story to story. Written sources and

oral traditions within the Sioux proves that the core territory of the Sioux was Minnesota in that time, but there appears various opinions about their origin (Gibbon, 2003).

In my research, I have explored three different possible directions from which the Sioux might have come. Both, Gibbon (2003) and Cagnon (2011) describe them almost identically. The first possibility is that the Sioux came from the east after landing on a peninsula and marched through North America. The second possibility is that they arrived from the land of ice, from the north. The third alternative suggests that the Sioux had lived in Central America and is rather religious and its oral tradition is told especially among the Lakota. The story tells that the first people emerged from underground through a cave and some Lakota believe that they passed through the Wind Cave in the Black Hills of western South Dakota (Gibbon, 2003).

According to Cagnon (2011):

Early Siouan speakers originally lived in the area of the Appalachians in today's Kentucky and the Carolinas. As the original population expanded and subdivided, these Sioux created 19 distinct languages. Seven groups became woodland tribes, including the Dakota. After 1300, the Teton dialect of Dakota, Lakota, evolved on the plains along with eleven other Siouan languages such as Hidatsa. (p.11)

They used to be one large group. However, the Native Americans are widely known for migration across the country in all directions, which was the cause of the split of the greater Sioux Nation into the Seven Council Fires. Around 1300, the Sioux had their homeland in today are of Minnesota and they were called Proto-Dakota. Throughout the following centuries they started dividing into smaller groups and tribes and they travelled to various locations. The only exception was the Dakota Sioux, who remained

in the territory of Minnesota. This led to emerging of various new cultural distinctions among the Sioux. Throughout the sixteenth century all members of the Seven Council Fires secured their homelands and each of them had its own culture developed.

#### **4.3 The Sioux Nation from 1650s till the Battle of Little Bighorn**

The seventeenth century was a crucial turning point in Native Americans history, because it was time when Europeans began the colonization of the New World and expansion to the west. This time period is usually referred to as “The French and English Fur Trade”, because most of the trading European goods were exchanged for furs, which were collected by hunting. Gibbon (2003) discusses: “When first encountered by the French in the mid-seventeenth century, the Sioux occupied a vast expanse of territory that stretched from the woodlands of central Minnesota into the tall-grass prairies of the eastern Dakotas.” (p.50)

These initial encounters affected the Sioux (and other Indian tribes) in every way. It affected their life style, their culture, inhabited territories, etc... This time period is mostly described from Euro-American perspective (Gibbon, 2003) and unlike the prehistory of the Sioux it provides more complex and accurate information about the Sioux. As Cagnon (2011) argues:

Although the Sioux had long been entwined with events beyond their country, the 1650s ushered in a period of massive change precipitated by the arrival of Europeans in the Americas. French establishment of the colonies of Quebec, Montreal, and Acadia (later Nova Scotia) and Dutch creation of trade posts along the Hudson River, soon acquired by the English, set forces in motion that would

alter Sioux society and help shape Santee history for decades. Chippewa initial control of access to French goods and the Beaver Wars of conquest and devastation launched by the Iroquois—both in the seventeenth century—were the indirect result of European colonialism. Much of America was a maelstrom of constant motion as tribes and Europeans sought access to and control of resources. (p.13)

The first people with whom the Dakota/Santee people started to trade were not ironically French people, but an Indian tribe, Chippewa. That was because the Chippewa had to access to French colonies. Another tribe of importance in colonial times was the Iroquis, who made pacts and alliances with English people against the French people as discussed in Gibbon (2003). This tribe also initiated the first changes in territory distribution of many Indian tribes, including the Sioux. The reason was, as described in Cagnon(2011), that once they had no more materials to trade with English people, they were attacked and robbed adjoining Indian tribes, which resulted in the moving of many Indian tribes, including Santee and Yankton, in a westward direction to escape the Iroquis. Eventually, the Iroquis were defeated along with English by above mentioned Chippewa who joined with French and this defeat secured French dominant position in the New World for several decades.

Eventually, the Chippewa turned against French traders and joined with the Santee, although it did not last long as described as following (Cagnon, 2011):

In 1736, a Santee-Chippewa band attacked wintering French traders and killed them. The French blamed the Dakota for the killings and offered the Chippewa a choice of joining them against the Dakota or remaining allies of the Dakota.

Chippewa leaders chose the French alliance because choosing the Dakota would have damaged the Chippewa economy and courted military disaster. This incident precipitated about a century of Dakota-Chippewa war that would eventually realign the boundaries of each tribe. (p.15)

For the Santee, it was a time where they started moving to more southwestward direction to secure their safety nevertheless they still tried to continue trading with French. Other tribes of the Sioux Nation stopped fleeing westward and most of them became plains Indians. The Yankton were an exception, they moved towards the French traders and settled their homeland in South Dakota. In that time the Yankton were very often joining the Teton Sioux in times of war. The Teton were moving across the country and they finally resided in the Black Hills. Being the largest tribe of the Sioux Nation, the Teton were later referred to by Europeans as Lords of the Plains (Cagnon, 2011). Around the beginning of the eighteenth century, horses were introduced to the Native Americans and most of them became a nomadic people, such as the Yankton or the Teton.

An important part of the French Fur Trade was for French to become members of the Indians. This was due to securing the trading between Europeans and Indians. As Gibbon (2002) states: “Many French traders married or lived with Sioux women and took Sioux names.” (p.56)

The first encounters with the Europeans did not mean only changes in territories and initial struggles with them, but also many new tools, food, plants and weapons were introduced to the Sioux and other Indian tribes. Europeans brought to the New World and introduced to the Sioux animals like swine, cattle, and most importantly horses, which became very useful and important for the Sioux development of life. On the other hand,

Europeans found also many new things like buffalo, tobacco, tomatoes, and potatoes, of course, which were very quickly exported to Europe. But not all of the new explorations were good, for the Native Americans or for the Europeans. For instance, Europeans brought many diseases from the native homelands, like smallpox, yellow fever, and malaria. In an “exchange”, syphilis was brought to the Europeans from the New World (Bailey, Kennedy, 1987). These diseases which were brought to America caused many fatal incidents among the Indians. Many of them (including the Sioux) died, some of the tribes almost died out completely. Another cause of many Indians death was alcohol which was also brought by the Europeans. Undoubtedly, this was a very important era which started the reformation of the Sioux society into the form that is known to us now.

The above mentioned events commenced major changes in the life of the Sioux. I think that the major changes happened after the *Declaration of Independence* in 1776 and the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 when the United States as we know them now began to flourish and started substantial expansion in the westward direction. To support my opinion, Gibbon (2002) claims: “Despite the radical changes of the French and British eras, the Sioux were still in control of their lives at the time of purchase from France by President Thomas Jefferson of the Louisiana Territory in 1803. This event began in earnest the early American period in Sioux history.” (p.76)

The nineteenth century was thick with many disputes between the Americans and the Native Americans. A great quantity of skirmishes and wars occurred, but also a large number of treaties were signed, so the U.S. had a secured way of westward expansion. There was a reason for all the conflicts and it is clean that the Americans initiated most of them. The newly born US was making the Sioux live under the rule of their government



and by their laws. This new attitude was not accepted by many Indian tribes, including the Sioux (Cagnon, 2011). And even though the treaties were written in favor of both sides, the US kept breaking which led to several uprisings of the Indians. The treaties were written as a document which secured purchasing lands for the Sioux and move them in more westward direction. “These treaties were agreements whereby Indian nations would exchange their rights to hunt and to live on parcels of land for trade goods, yearly cash payments, and the right to remain on part of their homelands.” (retrieved from: <http://usdakotawar.org/history/treaties#sthash.Em2QGZ27.dpuf>). Although many of them were broken and unfilled by the U.S. government which, as already mentioned resulted into those uprisings. The treaties are publicly accessible on [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject\\_menus/ntreaty.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/ntreaty.asp).

#### **4.3.1 The Dakota Conflict of 1862**

The Sioux fought many skirmishes and wars with the U.S. throughout the nineteenth century. Some of them were minor, but some of them resulted into long lasting wars, for example the Dakota Conflict of 1862 which comprised the Santee only, who moved from their former territory, Minnesota, and were promised to receive yearly payments. The conflict was initiated by an American trader, Andrew Myrick who refused to hand over the Sioux their yearly payment and responded to the Santee as following: “If they're hungry, let them eat grass.” These words started the conflict during which many men have fallen on both sides. This war ended horribly for the Dakota people. In 1863, the U.S. government cancelled all the treaties signed with the Dakota and started moving them westward and placing them into reservations. (retrieved from:

<http://usdakotawar.org/history/aftermath>). This war is exceptional in one more way. The aftermath included the execution of thirty-six Dakota people as an example to all other tribes who would try to fight the U.S. This became the biggest mass-execution in the history of the U.S. (retrieved in: <http://www.crystalinks.com/sioux.html>)

#### **4.3.2 The Red Cloud's War**

Another important war that took place in the 1860's is Red Cloud's War. It lasted almost three years, 1866-1868. This war was concerning mainly the Oglala, whose leader was the above mentioned Red Cloud.

Red Cloud was a member of Lakota/Teton Sioux, more specifically, the Oglala Sioux. He was known among his people as a fierce warrior and a great horse rider which helped him increase his reputation throughout years. He did not participate in many skirmishes and battles against the U.S. therefore he became very-well known as a peaceful defender of the Sioux rights. For instance, when the Great Sioux War was about to start, Red Cloud with his people did not interfere in any battle of the Great Sioux War. A few years before his death, Red Cloud have himself baptized as a Christian (K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom, 2010, pp. 138-142). His full life story can be read, for example, in publication written by Larson (1997), *Red Cloud: Warrior-statesman of the Lakota Sioux*.

There had been several skirmishes with the white people before but this was the escalation of those skirmishes. The Wyoming and Montana territories, in that time known as the Powder River Country, were the venue of the war. The initiation was the meeting which took place at Fort Laramie in 1866. White men met with the Sioux and Cheyenne

leader to discuss building of the new forts in the Indian lands on Bozeman trail, which was a route that was used mostly by those searching for gold and connecting the Montana and Oregon territories. In my view the blame falls onto the Americans once again, because they began the foundation of the forts before the meeting was over which concluded in Red Cloud's furious reaction and the threat that the white men should be cautious about their scalps. Afterwards, Red Cloud's men started attacking the areas where the new forts were being built, killing the white men and sabotaging the process of completing the forts. Only two fights were not victory for Red Cloud but others were won under the leadership of Red Cloud and another important Sioux figure, Crazy Horse (more information about Crazy Horse further in the thesis). I am sure it was Red Cloud's resolve and continuous havoc which he was bringing among the white men that coerced the Americans to summon another meeting with the Sioux in April, 1868. This time, General William Sherman, who was in charge of that area, negotiated with Red Cloud with more respect and offer the Sioux a new treaty, the Treaty of Fort Laramie of 1868. I consider this treaty being very important therefore the further paragraph is focused on it. (retrieved from: [http://www.franksrealm.com/Indians/Person\\_facts/redcloudswar.html](http://www.franksrealm.com/Indians/Person_facts/redcloudswar.html))

The Sioux Treaty of 1868 is in my view very important document in the history of the Sioux. Firstly, it marks the end of the Red Cloud's War and generally every other skirmishes between the Sioux and the U.S. The aim of the treaty was to demarcate the territory of the Sioux where white men have no right to expand to and it also marks the territory for hunting which should not to be trespassed with white men. This territory which was agreed on by both sides is the Black Hills in South Dakota with the hunting territories of Montana and Wyoming. Lawson (2007) says: "The treaty also recognized

and area of “unceded Indian territory”.” (p.38). It means that every white man who wanted to enter the territory had to obtain consent from the tribe living there. By the Americans this new Indian territory was called the Great Sioux Reservation. (retrieved from: <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/sioux-treaty/>)

The reason why I think the treaty is a very important document is that it did not only mark the Sioux territory, but the U.S. government also wanted the Sioux to start accepting the American education, religion and culture. Their demands were unacceptable to many of the Sioux nation since they wanted to keep their traditional culture and customs. And in that time, around 1870’s, the most famous Sioux leader emerged, Sitting Bull. According to Lawson (2007): “He believed that the Lakota people and their allies should isolate themselves from the *wasichus* (“white eyes”), or Euro-Americans. He advised that they should strictly follow their traditional culture and religion.” (p.41). This resulted in leaving many of the Sioux on the reservation and continue to practice their traditional way of life, although most of the traditionalists also used to return to the U.S. encampments and forts, who were in charge of the reservations, winter to receive their yearly payments which were also part of the treaty.

All negotiations with the Native Americans were under the responsibility of Indian agencies and all the Indian agencies were in that time part of the BIA organization. BIA is an acronym for Bureau of Indian Affairs. The BIA was founded in 1824 and it has been operating since. The BIA served to supervise all matters which include any Native American tribe. Its responsibilities included as following: “...to take charge of the appropriations for annuities and current expenses, to examine and approve all vouchers for expenditures, to administer the funds for the civilization of the Indians, to decide on

claims arising between Indians and whites under the intercourse act, and to handle the ordinary Indian correspondence of the War Department.” (retrieved from:

<http://www.americansc.org.uk/Online/indians.htm>)

### **4.3.3 Factors leading to the Great Sioux War of 1876**

Nevertheless, this social organization did not have long lasting impact. As it was commonly done by the U.S. people, the Americans kept on trespassing into the Sioux territory hence not obeying the treaty. As one might expect (Lawson, 2007): “The Sioux responded by constantly attacking the military escorts assigned to protect railroad workers,...”(p.41).

Although the trespassing was mostly done by farmers and gold seekers (the situation in the Black Hills is nicely depicted in the TV show Deadwood (2004)), the U.S. government made a new attempt to discuss the Black Hills issue with the Indians. The meeting took place in Washington in 1875 where the U.S. proposed the Indians a new land where they could safely live, the territory of present Oklahoma. As might have been expected, the Sioux and the Cheyenne rejected the proposal which concluded into continuing of skirmishes between the two opposing nations (retrieved from:

<http://1onewolf.com/lakota/society9.htm>).

The climax of the Black Hills issue which started the Great Sioux War was performed by the U.S. army. Despite the fact that the Indians (the Sioux and the Cheyenne) refused to leave the Black Hills and move to Oklahoma territory, the U.S. army already thought of the Black Hills as their territory. Therefore a deadline was established for the Indians to return to their reservation (Oklahoma) by the end of January

on 1876 which the Indians ignored. Hence the U.S. army started treating the Indians in the Black Hills as hostiles and the military was sent to deal with them. The reason why the U.S. was lusting for the Black Hills so horribly was the exploration of gold mines discovered by George A. Custer and his men (Lawson, 2007). And the reason why the Indians did not want to leave the Black Hills was that this area was thought by the Sioux as a sacred territory and by many as a place of their origin. All these factors resulted into the Great Sioux War of 1876.

#### **4.3.4 The Great Sioux War of 1876**

The Great Sioux War began in spring of 1876 and throughout the year several campaigns were led against the Native Americans. The Sioux were not the only Native Americans that stood against the U.S. army, the Cheyenne and the Arapaho were the Sioux allies in the war. This war is often referred to as the Black Hills War because the Black Hills was the main reason of the war as described above.

Several skirmishes and battles were fought over the year, it may be divided chronologically as follows (retrieved in: <http://1onewolf.com/lakota/society9.htm>): The Reynolds' Campaign, Summer Expeditions, which included three major battles of the Great Sioux War; The Battle of Rosebud, The Battle of Little Bighorn and The Battle of Slim Buttes. Later that year the last two campaigns marched against the Indians: the Mackenzie's campaign and the Miles' Campaign. And also several very important figures of the Great Sioux Nation were involved in this conflict, including Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull. Important figures on the U.S. side were, amongst others, George R. Crook, Alfred H. Terry and John Gibbons who were the chiefs of the three columns which

headed against the Native American tribes as well as George Armstrong Custer who was under the command of General Terry at the beginning of the war (Lawson, 2007).

The initial strike which launched the uniting of the Sioux, the Cheyenne and the Arapaho was the attack on one of the Cheyenne villages in the Powder River Valley, which is situated in Montana. This strike was made before the end of the winter by General Crook (Lawson, 2007). The incident alarmed all the tribes living around the Black Hills and concluded in a united army which was to defend their homelands against the U.S. armies. This foray is also known as the Reynolds' campaign.

The first real battle which occurred in the Great Sioux War is the Battle of Rosebud which took place on June seventeenth of 1876 in Montana territory. Interestingly, this was not initiated by the U.S. army but by the united Indians, who did not want to wait until they would be attacked and launched against the enemy under the command of Crazy Horse. The battle was won by Crazy Horse, although it was not a flawless victory. Even though, Crook's army must have retreated due to low ammunition and supplies, Crazy Horse lost many men in this battle (Lawson, 2007).

Crazy Horse, as summarized in K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom (2010, pp. 125-129) was a member of the Oglala Sioux and a very memorable a respectable figure among the Sioux and an important historical figure. He managed to become a great and a fearful warrior leader in early years of his life. By the time he turned twenty, he raided along with other Indians as their leader. He intervened into many battles and wars against the U.S. For instance, he fought under the command of Red Cloud in Red Cloud's War of 1866-68. He also participated in the Great Sioux War where he played a big role as a Lakota warrior leader. Despite being voluntarily taken into reservation by the U.S., Crazy

Horse remained undefeated his whole life. He was killed by a U.S. soldier after being taken in custody. Several books describing his life were written such as *Crazy Horse: Story of a Brave Sioux Leader* by Brown Quarterly (1999) or *Crazy Horse: A Life* written by Larry McMurtry (1999).

The most important battle that took place in the Great Sioux War was the Battle of Little Bighorn. This battle was fought near the Little Bighorn River in Montana territory on June twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth. A general historical overview of this battle and the setting can be seen online at: <http://www.nps.gov/libi/index.htm>

Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, amongst others, were the main leaders of the united tribes of the Native Americans. As summarized in K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom (2010, 147-151), Sitting Bull was a member of the Hunkpapa tribe belonging to the Lakota/Teton Sioux and one of the greatest leaders and a holy man of the Sioux. He was named the leader in 1876 for spiritual wisdom, generosity, fairness and his bravery in battle. Sitting Bull was one of the Indians who refused to sign the Treaty of Fort Laramie therefore became a non-treaty Indian. After the offer made by the U.S. government to purchase the Black Hills he responded as written in K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom (2010): “The Black Hills belong to me. If the whites try to take them, I will fight.” (p.148). More details about his life are written, for instance, in publication *Sitting Bull: The Life and Times of an American Patriot* written by Utley (2008). Sitting Bull was also a reason why many more Native Americans joined the fight against the U.S. As Lawson (2007) describes it:

In early June 1876, a large group of Sioux and Northern Cheyennes gathered on the Rosebud Creek in Montana for their annual Sun Dance. This was their most



important spiritual ritual. Sitting Bull was among the leaders at the gathering. After sacrificing 50 pieces of his flesh in the dance, he fell into a trance and experienced a graphic vision. After he regained consciousness, he told the people that he had seen many killed U.S. soldiers falling upside down into the Sioux village. This vision was taken as a prophecy of future success in battle against the soldiers they called the “Long Knives.” They were given this name because of the long swords, or sabers, they carried with them. Following the Sun Dance, the camp moved southward and attracted more people as word spread of Sitting Bull’s vision. (p.45)

This vision encouraged all the Indians taking part in the war that they would defeat the U.S. cavalries.

The commander who was in control of the U.S. army was General George Armstrong Custer, who was already famous for his victories and leadership in other Battles including the Civil War. Two leaders under his command, Major Marcus Reno and Captain Frederick Benteen were also seasoned in battle Custer achieved his title of general at the age of twenty-three and earned himself a nickname ‘Boy General’. His most ‘famous’ battle was quite that of Little Bighorn where he was killed along with all of his men. (K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom, 2010, pp. 130-133)

When the battle flared up on twenty-fifth of June, Custer divided his men into three minor groups. The division was made as described in K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom (2010):

Custer divided his troops into three groups. He assigned one column of cavalry, under the command of Major Marcus Reno, to attack the camp from the south.

Meanwhile, he planned to circle around the camp with a second column of cavalry and attack from the north. He stationed the third group, under Captain Frederick Benteen, in the valley of the Little Bighorn to block off the Indians' best escape route. In devising his strategy, however, Custer severely underestimated the number of warriors in the camp. He also assumed that the Indians would choose to run away rather than stand and fight. (p.53)

I think that this decision changed the course of the battle. Another affect on the battle was second decision of Custer which was not to wait for reinforcements and start the attack immediately. Custer also made a big mistake when he underestimated the numbers and fighting efficiency of the Sioux and his allies. All of Custer's men were stepwise surrounded, defeated and mercilessly slaughtered by the Sioux and their allies under the leadership of Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse. When General Crook arrived two days later on the battlefield, all of the Native Americans were gone and he only found Custer and all of his men corpses scattered across the battlefield. This battle is known among the Sioux as the greatest victory in the history against the U.S. (K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom, 2010)

Nevertheless this was a great victory for the Sioux and most of them thought to be the final battle which would free them from the U.S. they were wrong (Lawson, 2007):

For the Sioux and Cheyennes, the Battle of the Little Bighorn symbolized the peak of their power as warrior nations and of the plains culture that supported their freedom. Yet the glory days and the old ways were not destined to last much longer. It took another 15 years and several more battles before the Sioux and Cheyennes were forced to acknowledge the reality of their defeat as nations. The

seeds of doom that led to the ultimate loss of their military and cultural war were firmly planted on the battlefield of their greatest victory. (p.102)

After this degrading defeat, the U.S. government started a great offensive against the Native Americans and forcefully put them on reservations. Most of the battles and campaigns which were waged against the Sioux and the Cheyenne afterwards, such as the Battle at Slim Buttes or the Mackenzie's campaign, ended with their defeat or their surrender. For instance, Crazy Horse surrendered in order to secure food and shelter for his people, but later was killed by a U.S. policeman when they were trying to put him in jail. (retrieved from: <http://1onewolf.com/lakota/society9.htm>)

Although the Great Sioux War was over and in the end not victorious for the Sioux, the affairs between the Native Americans and the U.S. were still in progress. Some historians also argue that the Great Sioux War did not end in 1877 but in 1890 after the Wounded Knee Massacre.

#### **4.4 Aftermath of the Battle of Little Bighorn**

After the end of the Great Sioux War the U.S. government started threatening the Sioux as Lawson (2007) implies: "A government commission pressured tribal leader into selling the Black Hills by threatening the withdrawal of rations of food, clothing, and supplies. The forced "agreement" reached in October 1877 not only separated the Black Hills from the Great Sioux Reservation, it also forced the tribes to give up their hunting grounds in the unceded territory." (p.103) The 'agreement' was found illegal in 1980 by the U.S. and recompense were given to the Sioux.

Some of the Sioux tried to keep on fighting and were calling ‘the roamers’ but eventually even they started to give up themselves into the hands of U.S. Before half of the year of 1877 passed almost all roamers surrendered to the U.S. (Lawson, 2007): “By April, nearly all of the roamers had decided that the comparative safety and free rations of the reservation was better option than dodging soldier’s bullets.” (p.105)

Even Sitting Bull who fled to Canada in attempt to secure the traditional way of living for his people eventually surrendered in 1881. Afterwards he was held as a prisoner before he was allowed to live with his people again and he made this proclamation, retrieved from Lawson (2007): “I surrender this rifle to you through my young son, whom I now desire to teach in this manner that he has become a friend of the Americans.... I wish it to be remembered that I was the last man of my tribe to surrender my rifle.” (p.108)

Several reservations were established in years after the Great Sioux war including: Cheyenne River, Lower Brulé, Pine Ridge, Rosebud, and Standing Rock (where Sitting Bull and his people lived). These reservations was founded on the localities of former Black Hills and the area of the Great Sioux Reservation was reduced almost six times its original demarcation. The reservations were horrible for the Sioux. They destroyed their traditional way of life and had a great impact on the Sioux culture. The Sioux, for instance, were not allowed to raid and hunt anymore or perform their traditional ceremonies. The warrior culture as had been known was now destroyed by the Americans.

Although the Great Sioux War was over and most Native Americans were living on reservations, problems with the Americans did not end. When Sitting Bull was

released after two years in prison he became once again a leader of his people in Pine Ridge Reservation and tried to maintain the Sioux traditional culture among his people, even though he made his peace with being under control of the Americans.

#### **4.5 The Ghost Dance Movement and the Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890**

Nevertheless the Sioux were mostly depressed and stripped off their pride and had almost no hope for the future, a new religion movement appeared in 1889. It was called the Ghost Dance. The father of this new movement was Wovoka, a shaman of the Paiute Indians, who lived among white men under the name of Jack Wilson and studied Christianity. K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom (2010) discuss, that Wovoka had a vision which showed him that the future for the Native Americans was secured and that all the Indians would become free and independent once again and that the white men would be gone. Wovoka was also showed a new form of dance of which performing one can bring back the ghosts of their dead ancestors. Lakota people adopted this new religion in the fall of 1889. As K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom (2010) discuss this new religion was to focus on restoring the hope of the Indians for better future but not by force. K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom (2010) support this view: “In fact, it told the followers to refrain from fighting and rely instead on supernatural means to achieve the goal.” (p.65)

Unfortunately not all Lakota adopted the Ghost Dance as peaceful as it was meant to be. Some of Lakota slightly changed the interpretation and thought of it as militant. This interpretation resulted in once again defying the federal agents. Therefore the U.S. government started paying more attention to this new religious movement.

All of this led to arresting Sitting Bull who did not want to deny his people rights to perform the Ghost Dance. Giving Sitting Bull's history, the U.S. government probably interpreted that as the beginning of a new resistance movement against the white men therefore they made the decision to arrest Sitting Bull. According to K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom (2010) a small police force was sent to Sitting Bull's home to take him in custody. Unfortunately, when Sitting Bull's people heard what was going on, they gathered in front of Bull's house started protesting. It all ended in a clash of shooting which resulted with Sitting Bull's death. Although Sitting Bull was very popular among his people his burial was sad after all. Lawson (2007) says: "Sitting Bull was buried in a nearby pauper's grave without ceremony, prayers, or family in attendance." (p.115)

The U.S. hoped that the arrest of Sitting Bull would stop the Ghost Dance performing and prevent another fierce revolt against the U.S. But as K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom (2010) implies: "Instead, the death of Sitting Bull and the arrival of federal troops in South Dakota created a panic among the Lakota. Afraid for their lives, thousands of tribal members fled the reservations. Many of Sitting Bull's followers headed for Pine Ridge, where they sought the protection of the Oglala chief Red Cloud. Many others headed for the Stronghold, a large plateau in the Badlands that could be easily defended in case of attack. Within a week, about 3,000 Lakota gathered there." (p.70)

One of the groups that were heading towards Red Cloud and his people, was a band of Indians with Big Foot in a position of their leader. Based on information in K. Hilsstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom (2010), Big Foot was a half-brother of Sitting Bull and a cousin of Crazy Horse. During his life he participated in several important events,

including the Battle of Little Bighorn where he supported his half-brother and his cousin. He also became a leader of an Indian band called the Miniconjou which lived, after the Great Sioux War, in the Cheyenne River Reservation.

But before Big Foot and his people could reach their hoped destination the U.S. soldiers drew level with them. Big Foot was asked to give up all of their weapons, but he handed over only few, therefore a search of the Miniconjou properties was ordered and many other weapons were found as K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom (2010) describes it.

Few minutes later one of the Miniconjou started performing the Ghost Dance to remind his people their new belief. And a few seconds later the massacre begun when a deaf member of the Indian group struggled with a soldier over his weapon and it went off. The soldiers did not only kill men but also women and children for several miles around the actual initial place.

Although the U.S. government later published this event as a battle, several witnesses and the fact that many dead bodies were found miles from the initial place, proved that this was no battle but just a massacre of mostly innocent people. After this massacre the Ghost Dance was stopped in being performed by most of the Indians in order to avoid a similar incident. Many historians see this event as the end of the Great Sioux War or at least as the last major event as K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom (2010) say: “The massacre at Wounded Knee was the last episode in four centuries of conflict between American Indians and white settlers.” (p.76)

K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom (2010) also provide a short summary of the impact of the United States on the Native American population:

In the years immediately following the Wounded Knee Massacre, Indians and whites alike openly wondered whether Native Americans would survive the upcoming twentieth century. After all, tribes from the Pacific Northwest to the Deep South—and everywhere in between—had been devastated during the course of the 1800s. They had endured horrible population losses from white man's diseases and military strikes, terrible blows to their traditional cultures, and widespread seizures of sacred lands that had also served as their finest hunting grounds. By 1900 the entire population of native peoples in the United States had shrunk to 250,000, a far cry from the estimated 2 million Indians who had roamed the land three centuries earlier, when European colonists first arrived. (p. 79)

#### **4.6 The Sioux in twentieth century**

The Wounded Knee Massacre was the last major incident between the Sioux and the U.S. After the decimation of nearly two hundred and fifty Lakota people, the Sioux stopped resisting the white men and started accepting the life under the U.S. supervision. Even though all the wars and battles ended the Sioux life was not easy in the twentieth century among the white men. For the Sioux it was a century full uncertainty and injustice when one moment the Sioux were started being acknowledged as sovereign nation the other they were disadvantaged and oppressed by the U.S. For instance, at the beginning of the twentieth century, many children were compelled to attend Indian boarding schools, where they were taught Christianity and the Sioux way of life was suppressed. K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom claims: "By 1900, in fact, tens of thousands



of Indians had been whisked away from their families to one of the more than 150 Indian boarding schools in operation.” (p.80)

Another factor of suppression of the Sioux and other American Indians was the era of the General Allotment Act (also called the Dawes Act). As K. Hillstrom, & L. C.

Hillstrom (2010) discusses, this era started with signing the Dawes Act in 1887.

Generally, this meant that all the lands formerly belonging to the Sioux were divided into many small parcels and assigned to an individual Sioux (or other Indian) family. The rest of the lands which were not assigned to anybody were free for white settlers to inhabit.

This distribution of Indian lands accelerated after 1902, after allowing Indians to sell their allotment lands. This Act had a terrible impact on the Sioux life and culture in two ways.

Firstly, the Sioux were stripped of the possibility to discuss any matters concerning their tribe because in that time they were only responsible for their allotment land. The second

impact was on the Sioux (Indian) population (K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom, 2010):

“As land loss and poverty stalked the reservation, so too did alcoholism and disease.

Tuberculosis, measles, and trachoma—a contagious disease that can cause blindness—were particularly fearsome problems.” (p.86)

The second quarter of the twentieth century became a little better for the Sioux and other American Indians. Several new organizations were founded in order to improve the situation of Native Americans, such SAI (Society of American Indians) or NCAI

(National Council of American Indians). In nineteen twenties, all the Indians were finally rewarded with a citizenship. Many of the Indians also served a helped in both, the World

War I and the World War II. Their skills became very handfull for the U.S. army. A very important act that helped to restore at least a little bit the Sioux traditional way of life was

the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) signed in 1934. It helped the Sioux and all other Native Americans in these matters (K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom, 2010): “This legislation, which Collier and other supporters described as a “New Deal for American Indians,” dramatically changed the relationship between the tribes and the U.S. government. The IRA greatly increased the self-governing powers of Indian tribes, who were given the right to form tribal governments. It also authorized new funding programs to support Indian farms and businesses, overhauled education and health programs for the tribes, promoted soil conservation and other environmental initiatives on reservation lands, established an Indian court system, and restored Indian religious and cultural freedoms. Finally, the IRA ended the government’s hated allotment policies once and for all, and it returned large expanses of unsold “surplus” reservation lands to the tribes.”

(p.90)

Although this might have seemed for the Indians as a beginning of U.S. acceptance of Indians, it all changed once again in nineteen in the half of the twentieth century. In those years, the white people who were in charge of decisions making of Native Americans began the relocation of Indians into urban areas. The reason was that the Indians cannot acclimate to life of white unless they live among them. The result of this act was leaving many Indians their reservations to avoid moving in cities. Of course not all Indians did not want to not move to a big city some of them did that voluntarily. Fortunately, it did not last long and before the year 1960 the relocation ended with the help of newly founded organization NCAI (the National Congress of American Indians) (K. Hillstrom, & L. C. Hillstrom, 2010). In the following years several new institutions and organizations were founded to help the status and situation of Native Americans, for

instance: the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC) or the American Indian Movement (AIM) (more contemporary organizations are possible to find online at:

<http://www.ncai.org/tribal-directory/tribal-organizations>)

The second half of the twentieth century was filled mostly with protests against the U.S. government and the way they treated Indian Americans. Although the quantity of those protests was not low, none of them were too serious. The most well-known incident of that time was the Wounded Knee Incident of 1973. The incident concerned about two hundred members of Oglala tribe who occupied the town of Wounded Knee for 71 days in protest of administration of the white chairman of Oglala tribe. The reason why the Oglala occupied this city is because of its connection to Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890. (retrieved from: <http://1onewolf.com/lakota/society11.htm>)

The Wounded Knee Incident of 1973 was the greatest opposition to U.S. government and the way they treated the Native Americans in the twentieth century. Although no other incidents similar to this one appeared since then, Indians still have kept protesting but not so frequently, I believe. The today coexistence of the Sioux (and other Native Americans) seems to on quite good terms I believe there still might be something to improve.

## **5 - Conclusion**

The thesis described a general overview of the Great Sioux Nation in the first chapter. The origin of the name “Sioux” along with terms such as “Indian” were identified and explained. The first chapter also researched the tribal organization of the Sioux along with their three major divisions and the Seven Council Fires including the explanation of the Seven Council Fires. The second chapter provided an accurate, but brief, description of Sioux religion, their primary idols and the seven most important ceremonies followed by brief description of their personal possessions value. Even though the Sioux were such a large Nation spread all over the Great Plains, they still managed to meet yearly and function as a single nation without any major affairs within it.

Further the thesis discusses the three possible origins of the Sioux and outlines the initial encounters with the Europeans and the first influences they had on the Sioux culture and life. After the arrival of Europeans, the Sioux managed to struggle very persistently and long to defend their homelands and traditional lives against the influence and impact of European westward expansion and culture, which the thesis supported with chronological description of the most important historical events concerning both the Sioux and the Europeans. Even though the odds were not always in favor of the Sioux, they still did not abandon their determination to preserve their lands and way of life. A good example of that is the Battle of Little Bighorn of 1876. The thesis also explored that a large quantity of the affairs with the Sioux and other Native Americans were initiated by the Europeans and the impact of the European westward expansion on their homelands and life.

Throughout the description of the historical events, the thesis outlines the impact of European influence and power on the life of the Sioux as taking their lands or relocating them into reservations. Several reservations founded in the second half of the eighteenth century were introduced as well. The thesis managed to explore how that Sioux and other Indians continued believing in better future after the complete surrender of almost all Native Americans by following new religion, the Ghost Dance movement. The thesis supported the claim that the new religion worked because the U.S. started to ban the movement in order to prevent from any new resistance against the white men.

Besides the most important events, the thesis presented the most important historical figures of the Great Sioux Nation, such as: Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse or Red Cloud. It also briefly described the life of General George Armstrong Custer.

The thesis finished with a brief outline of the twentieth century of with a short description of a few important events along with presenting briefly the old-new situation of the Sioux people among the white men.

## 6 - Appendixes

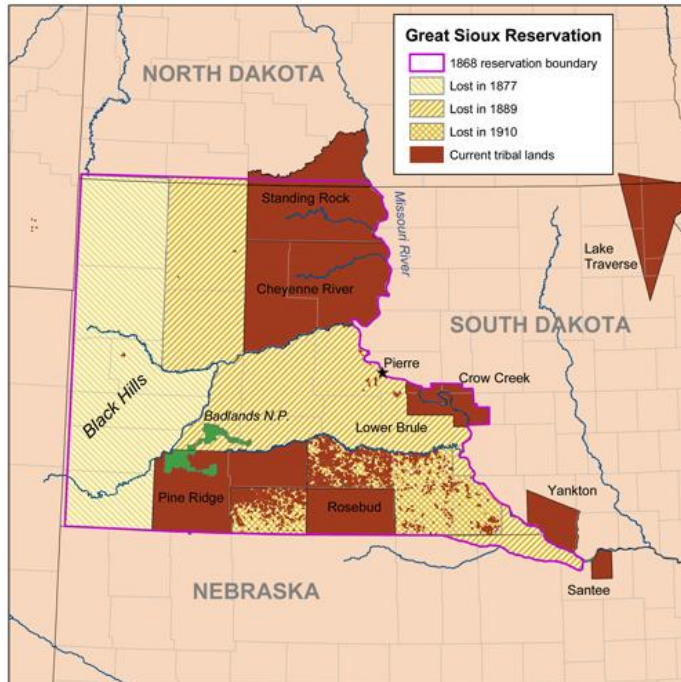
Pictures:



National flag of the Great Sioux Nation. The emblem is formed out of the teepees where the Sioux lived and together they form the Sun, one of the things that the Sioux honored the most. (retrieved from: <http://www.snowowl.com/images/greatsioux/image002.jpg>)



A map of Indian tribes and Nations at the time of Columbus arrival. (retrieved from: [http://www.emersonkent.com/map\\_archive/native\\_american\\_tribes\\_map.htm](http://www.emersonkent.com/map_archive/native_american_tribes_map.htm))



Map of development of Sioux homelands and territories after the For Laramie Treaty of 1868. (retrieved from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Siouxreservationmap.png>)

### Inspired modern culture:

The life and historical develop of the Sioux and other Native Americans has led to making a large number of movies concerning the culture, customs, life or historical events of the Sioux. Among such belong, for instance, TV miniseries Into the West (2005), in which a various attitudes towards Indian population is showed including the trade between the Europeans and the Indians and even some of the ceremonies and customs are performed in this TV show.

Another one is already mentioned TV show Deadwood (2004) following the events in the small town Deadwood, South Dakota, founded in the times of the Gold Rush in Black Hills. This little town was famous for being lawless therefore very dangerous.

Movies are another part of modern cultural life which was inspired by the Sioux or Indians' stories. Among the best movies presenting either historical events or life of the Sioux and relations with the white men belong: Dances with Wolves (1990) or Burry My Heart at Wounded Knee (2007).

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## 8 - Summary in Czech

Cílem mojí bakalářské práce je prozkoumat tradiční způsob života kmene Siouxů a faktorů, jež ovlivnily jejich život od příchodu Evropanů. První část práce se zabývá základními znalostmi o Siouxech, původem jejich jména, rozličnými názvy, jimiž je Evropané nazývaly/nazývají, a jejich kmenovým uskupením. Druhá část práce popisuje kulturu a zvyky Siouxů. Nejdříve se soustřeďuje na základní znalosti o kultuře a zvycích Siouxů a jejich náboženství. Dále druhá část popisuje nejdůležitější obřady a zvyky Velkého Siouxskeho Národa. Třetí, nejrozsáhlejší část, zkoumá historii Siouxskeho kmene. Nejprve se zabývá různými možnostmi původu Siouxů. Dále tato část popisuje počáteční setkání s Evropany, a jaký vliv na ně zpočátku měli. Nadále se tato část zabývá popisem nejhlavnějších událostí Siouxske historie zahrnující Evropany až do konce devatenáctého století a dopadem těchto událostí na život a kulturu Siouxů. Mimo tyto události je také představeno několik důležitých historických postav spolu s krátkým životopisem. Konec práce se věnuje shrnutí nejdůležitějších událostí dvacátého století.