

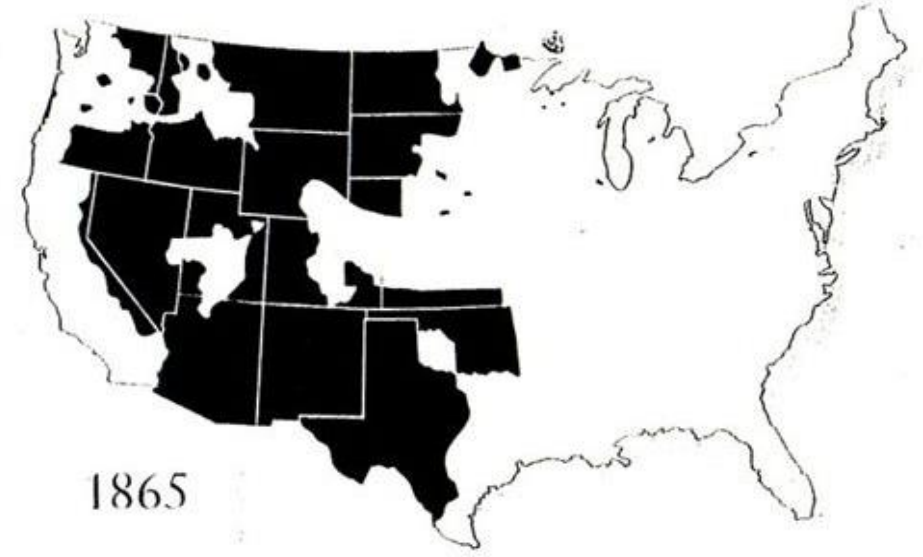
# Government Policies towards the Plains Indians: Conflict and Tension

## **Lesson Objectives:**

- To consider the Impact on the Plains Indians of all of the Government Action and Policies from the 1850s onwards.
- To investigate the conflicts with the Indians that developed in the 1860s and the Consequences.

## Why was conflict on the Plains difficult to resolve?

The Indian Appropriations Act of 1851 had introduced the idea of a 'reservation' for American Indians. The US government promised the Indians they would not lose more land.



**Explain what happened to Indian land between 1850 and 1880**  
**Why may the US government have broken their promise?**

Why was conflict on the Plains difficult to resolve?

# Can you predict possible problems with this 1851 treaty?

## The 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty

End fighting between tribes  
Allow migrants to travel through their lands in safety  
Permit surveyors from the railroad companies to enter their lands

Protect Plains Indians from white Americans (including migrants trying to settle on Plains Indian land)

Allow the government to build roads through their lands and construct army posts  
Pay compensation if any individuals from their tribe broke the Treaty terms (e.g. by attacking migrants)

Pay the tribes an annuity (yearly payment) of \$50,000 as long as the Treaty terms were kept.

Why was conflict on the Plains difficult to resolve?

You have been given some information on three main conflicts which took place after the first Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. This became known as The Indian Wars.

Read through the information for each conflict.



**Conflict 1.**  
**Little Crow's War**  
**1861 - 1862**



**Conflict 2.**  
**The Cheyenne Wars**  
**1864 - 1867**



**Conflict 3.**  
**Red Cloud's War**  
**1866 - 1868**

# Why was conflict on the Plains difficult to resolve?



The White settlers  
**were completely**  
responsible for  
continued  
conflict

The White settlers  
**were partly**  
responsible for  
continued  
conflict

The White settlers  
**were not**  
responsible for  
continued  
conflict



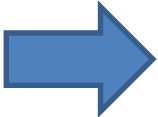


# Indian War 1: 1862 – Little Crow’s War

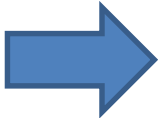
## Little Crow was Chief of a band of the Dakota Sioux in Minnesota



**Background Info:**  
In 1851 Crow’s band had signed a treaty and agreed to move to a reservation in return for a payment each year of \$80,000. The reservation was small but Little Crow thought it would give security to his people.



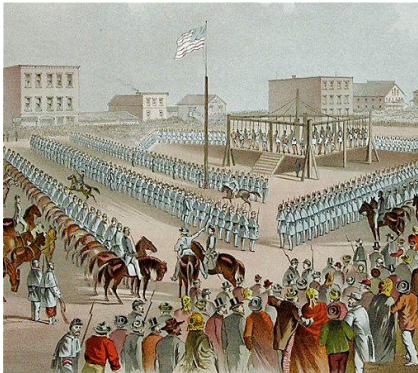
**Cause of the Conflict**  
Reservation was poor land did not produce many crops  
Government agency cheated the Indians, holding back payments, giving inedible food as part payment  
Settlers started to take land nearby  
Warrior brotherhoods launched raids to steal food from the reservation stores. By 1862 Indian people were starving and eating grass, the reservation agent showed no sympathy.



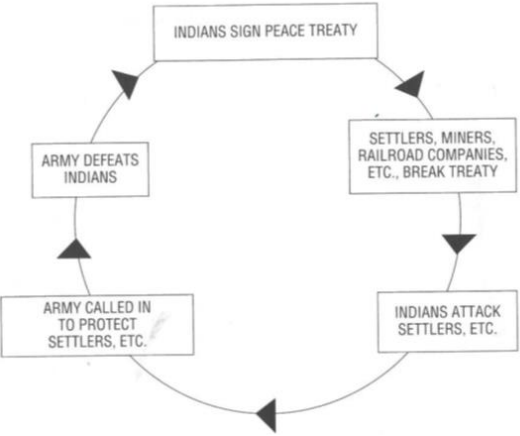
**Action Taken**  
The Civil War was underway, Little Crow and other chiefs believed the time was right to act and take back what they felt was rightfully theirs. They took food and supplies and burnt down the Reservation Agency buildings. Unfortunately some of the young warriors had little respect for their chiefs and went further and slaughtered 600 soldiers and local settlers including women and children against Little Crow’s wishes.



**Government response**  
Army sent in - 400 Sioux warriors put on trial. 38 are hanged. The rest of the tribe are moved to isolated, barren smaller reservations where many starve to death. Price on head of any Dakota Sioux still hiding in Minnesota. Little Crow was scalped and beheaded.



*We have waited a long time ..We have no food, but there are stores, filled with food. We ask you, the agent, make some arrangement by which we can get food from the stores, or else we may take our own step to keep ourselves from starving. When men are hungry they help themselves.*



The repeated pattern of events

## Tasks: Little Crow's War

**True or False? Tick the Correct ones and rewrite the False ones so they are correct.**

- Little Crow was Chief of a band of the Sioux Tribe.
- In the 1850s he had agreed to move his people onto a reservation in return for a payment to the tribe of \$80,000.
- The reservation contained good farming land and his tribe had a good tradition of farming.
- The government agency who ran the reservation were sympathetic, made sure the payments were paid promptly and that the food payments were of good quality.
- Little Crow's tribe raided the agency stores and took food and supplies in 1862.
- Some of the young warriors in the band went further and slaughtered many settlers against Little Crow's wishes.
- The army's response was to arrest and hang many of the tribe.
- Little Crow escaped and lived peacefully.



## Indian War 2: 1864 – 67 The Sand Creek Massacre

**Tribes Involved: The Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes in Colorado: Chief Black Kettle**



### Background Info:

In 1851 the Fort Laramie Treaty had guaranteed the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians large areas of land.

### Cause of the Conflict

In 1858 Gold was discovered in the Indian territory in Colorado and prospectors began crossing over the territory, using up the grass and disrupting the buffalo. Some began to settle and demanded the government move these Plains Indians onto other areas. The government decided to negotiate with the Indians.

### Action Taken

In the **Fort Wise Treaty** Chiefs including Black Kettle agreed to move to a reservation in East Colorado with no hunting rights. However, many young warriors rejected the territory and remained on their lands. There were raids and attacks for three years. Finally Black Kettle, government officials and army commanders try to reach an agreement. Black Kettle sets up camp at Sand Creek, believing he was under army protection.

### Government response

Under pressure due to the Civil War, the government negotiated. They agreed to a larger reservation, and compensation. As soon as the war was over they went back on this deal. Black Kettle was murdered in 1868 in another massacre by US troops

### Indian Counter Action

The Young Indian Warriors felt they were right, White Americans could never be trusted. They attacked and destroyed many forts, buildings and killed settlers.

### Government response

The Governor of Colorado territory is determined to 'kill and destroy' hostile Indians. He hired Chivington, a civil war hero to do the job. He led 700 troops on a dawn raid. The camp surrendered but Chivington's men killed over 130 men, women and children. They took parts of their bodies to display in local saloons.

INDIANS SIGN PEACE TREATY

ARMY DEFEATS INDIANS

SETTLERS, MINERS, RAILROAD COMPANIES, ETC., BREAK TREATY

ARMY CALLED IN TO PROTECT SETTLERS, ETC.

INDIANS ATTACK SETTLERS, ETC.

The repeated pattern of events



## Tasks: The Sand Creek Massacre

**The following student has got in a muddle with some of the facts here. Rewrite this so it is correct.**

The Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes had been granted reservation land in the Fort Laramie Treaty in 1841. This land was in Utah. In 1858, gold was discovered there and prospectors poured into the area, breaking the terms of the Treaty. These settlers demanded the Plains Indians were treated fairly by the government. The government negotiated and got the Chief, Black Kettle, to agree to move again onto a different reservation with good hunting rights. Some members of the tribe did not agree with the move and refused to go. Raids and fighting continue for 10 years.

Black Kettle agrees to meet with government officials. Believing he is under protection of a truce he and many of his tribe set up camp in advance of these meetings. The President sends in 70 troops to 'kill and destroy' and the tribe was massacred.

Young warriors now believe white Americans can never be trusted continue fighting, and under pressure from the American War of Independence, the government is forced to negotiate again. They agree to allow Black Kettle's tribe a bigger reservation and there is no more massacres of his people.



# Indian War 3: 1866 –68 Red Cloud’s War

## Tribes Involved: Lakota Sioux



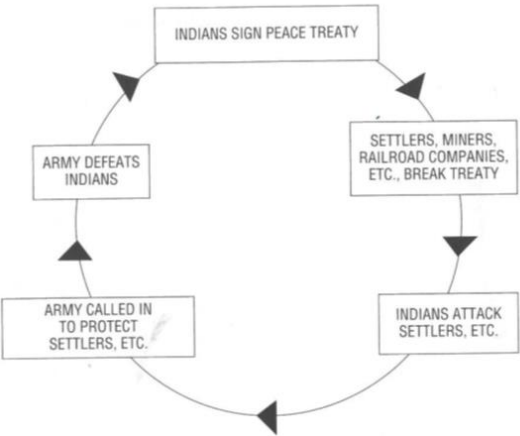
**Background Info:**  
Gold was discovered in Montana. Prospectors (gold hunters) used a short cut off the Oregon train known as the Bozeman Trail through Indian territory. This broke the Fort Laramie treaty of 1851.

**Cause of the Conflict**  
In 1866 the government called a meeting to discuss a new treaty. The government wanted to get the Indians to allow people to travel safely along the trail in return for gifts. However, Red Cloud discovers they have ordered for forts to be built anyway and is disgusted. He decides to fight.

**Action Taken**  
Crucially, Red Cloud persuaded other bands to fight alongside him and for two years they attacked soldiers and other workers building the forts. Chiefs Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse joined him as did bands from the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes. In total he had nearly 3,000 Indian warriors fighting with him. He was able to lead soldiers into an ambush and makes the Bozeman Trail impassable.

**The Second Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868**  
This was a direct consequence of Red Cloud’s War. The US government realised they could not defeat the Lakota Sioux without sending in huge numbers of men. Additionally, another trail to the gold-mining areas of Montana had been discovered. The government therefore agreed to close the Bozeman Trail and the forts along it. In return, Red Cloud agreed to move his people to another reservation in Dakota that became known as the Great Sioux Reservation. This included the sacred Black Hills. No whites were allowed to enter this land.

**Government response**  
The government in 1868 admits defeat and closes the Bozeman Trail (another route to the gold had already been found).  
The government passes the second Fort Laramie treaty in 1868



The repeated pattern of events



## Tasks: Red Cloud's War

**True or False? Tick the Correct ones and rewrite the False ones so they are correct.**

- Gold was a trigger for both the Sand Creek Massacre and Red Cloud's War.
- The short cut off the Oregon Trail was called the Dozeman Trail. Prospectors using this trail broke the 1841 Fort Laramie Treaty.
- Red Cloud was not able to get different bands and tribes to fight together against the soldiers building forts along the trail.
- 3,000 Indian warriors succeed in making the Bozeman Trail impassable to the prospectors and settlers.
- The government closes the Bozeman trail. No further mining of gold in the area occurs.
- The second Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 provides a new reservation for the Sioux People. It contains the sacred Black Hills. No white settlers were allowed to enter this territory.



Using the cycle of events on the left, do you think the 1868 Fort Laramie treaty will be kept to and respected?

Explain your answer.

# What were the Consequences of the Indians Wars of the 1860s?

## Why had some Tribes and Bands agreed to move to Reservations?

- Usually because the Chiefs and Councils believed it necessary for survival.
- They had less land to hunt on due to white settlers or the buffalos were being disrupted or killed.
- Signing treaties in order to get food supplies
- Force was used to get them to reservations and keep them there.

## Impact of Reservations

- Undermined Traditional Indian way of Life as Reservations were too small for hunting.
- Many Indians became dependent on food supplies from government.
- The Bureau of Indian Affairs agents who ran the reservations were often corrupt and cheated the tribes out of the food and money.
- When conflicts arose with the Indians, the government used that to take yet more land from them for breaking the treaty.

## President Grant's Policy 1868

- The new president, President Grant recognised what had been happening was unacceptable.
- He appointed new reservation agents with good reputations (Quakers) to prevent the cheating and corruption.
- Gave a budget of \$2million to improve conditions on reservations
- However, the movement onto reservations continued with the hope that Indians would learn to be 'American' citizens. (learn to farm etc.)
- Indians who resisted moving to reservations were to be treated as hostile and force could be used against them.