

= Sitting Bull =

Sitting Bull (Lakota : Tʔatʔáʔka Íyotake in Standard Lakota Orthography , also nicknamed Húʔkeʔni or " Slow " ; c . 1831 ? December 15 , 1890) was a Hunkpapa Lakota holy man who led his people during years of resistance to United States government policies . He was killed by Indian agency police on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation during an attempt to arrest him , at a time when authorities feared that he would join the Ghost Dance movement .

Before the Battle of the Little Bighorn , Sitting Bull had a vision in which he saw many soldiers , " as thick as grasshoppers , " falling upside down into the Lakota camp , which his people took as a foreshadowing of a major victory in which a large number of soldiers would be killed . About three weeks later , the confederated Lakota tribes with the Northern Cheyenne defeated the 7th Cavalry under Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer on June 25 , 1876 , annihilating Custer 's battalion and seeming to bear out Sitting Bull 's prophetic vision . Sitting Bull 's leadership inspired his people to a major victory . Months after their victory at the battle , Sitting Bull and his group left the United States for Wood Mountain , North @-@ West Territories (now Saskatchewan) , where he remained until 1881 , at which time he and most of his band returned to US territory and surrendered to U.S. forces . A small remnant of his band under Waʔblí ʔi decided to stay at Wood Mountain .

After working as a performer with Buffalo Bill 's Wild West show , Sitting Bull returned to the Standing Rock Agency in South Dakota . Because of fears that he would use his influence to support the Ghost Dance movement , Indian Service agent James McLaughlin at Fort Yates ordered his arrest . During an ensuing struggle between Sitting Bull 's followers and the agency police , Sitting Bull was shot in the side and head by Standing Rock policemen Lieutenant Bull Head (Tatankapah Lakota : Tʔatʔáʔka Pʔá) and Red Tomahawk (Marcelus Chankpidutah Lakota : " ʔhaʔʔpí Dúta ") after the police were fired upon by Sitting Bull 's supporters . His body was taken to nearby Fort Yates for burial . In 1953 , his Lakota family exhumed what were believed to be his remains , reburying them near Mobridge , South Dakota , near his birthplace .

= = Early life = =

Sitting Bull was born in Dakota Territory . In 2007 , Sitting Bull 's great @-@ grandson asserted from family oral tradition that Sitting Bull was born along the Yellowstone River , south of present @-@ day Miles City , Montana . He was named Jumping Badger at birth , and nicknamed Hunkesi , or " Slow , " said to describe his careful and unhurried nature . When the boy was fourteen years old he accompanied a group of Lakota warriors (which included his father and his uncle Four Horns) in a raiding party to take horses from a camp of Crow warriors . Jumping Badger displayed bravery by riding forward and counting coup on one of the surprised Crow , which was witnessed by the other mounted Lakota . Upon returning to camp his father gave a celebratory feast at which he conferred his own name upon his son . The name , Tʔatʔaʔka lyotʔaʔka (Tatanka lyotaka) , which in the Lakota language means " Buffalo Bull Who Sits Down " , would later be abbreviated to " Sitting Bull " . Thereafter , Sitting Bull 's father was known as Jumping Bull . At this ceremony before the entire band , Sitting Bull 's father presented his son with an eagle feather to wear in his hair , a warrior 's horse , and a hardened buffalo hide shield to mark his son 's passage into manhood as a Lakota warrior .

During the Dakota War of 1862 , in which Sitting Bull 's people were not involved , several bands of eastern Dakota people killed an estimated 300 to 800 settlers and soldiers in south @-@ central Minnesota in response to poor treatment by the government and in an effort to drive the whites away . Despite being embroiled in the American Civil War , the United States Army retaliated in 1863 and 1864 , even against bands which had not been involved in the hostilities . In 1864 , two brigades of about 2200 soldiers under Brigadier General Alfred Sully attacked a village . The defenders were led by Sitting Bull , Gall and Inkpadduta . The Lakota and Dakota were driven out , but skirmishing continued into August .

In September , Sitting Bull and about one hundred Hunkpapa Lakota encountered a small party near what is now Marmarth , North Dakota . They had been left behind by a wagon train

commanded by Captain James L. Fisk to effect some repairs to an overturned wagon . When he led an attack , Sitting Bull was shot in the left hip by a soldier . The bullet exited out through the small of his back , and the wound was not serious .

= = Red Cloud 's War = =

From 1866 to 1868 , Red Cloud as a leader of the Oglala Lakota fought against US forces , attacking their forts in an effort to keep control of the Powder River Country of Montana . In support of him , Sitting Bull led numerous war parties against Fort Berthold , Fort Stevenson , and Fort Buford and their environs from 1865 through 1868 . Sitting Bull also made guerrilla attacks on emigrant parties and smaller forts throughout the upper Missouri River region .

By early 1868 , the U.S. government desired a peaceful settlement to Red Cloud 's War . It agreed to Red Cloud 's demands that the US abandon forts Phil Kearny and C.F. Smith . Gall of the Hunkpapa (among other representatives of the Hunkpapa , Blackfeet , and Yankton Dakota) signed a form of the Treaty of Fort Laramie on July 2 , 1868 at Fort Rice (near Bismarck , North Dakota) . Sitting Bull did not agree to the treaty . He told the Jesuit missionary , Pierre Jean De Smet , who sought him out on behalf of the government : " I wish all to know that I do not propose to sell any part of my country . " He continued his hit @-@ and @-@ run attacks on forts in the upper Missouri area throughout the late 1860s and early 1870s .

The events of 1866 @-@ 1868 mark a historically debated period of Sitting Bull 's life . According to historian Stanley Vestal , who conducted interviews with surviving Hunkpapa in 1930 , Sitting Bull was made " Supreme Chief of the whole Sioux Nation " at this time . Later historians and ethnologists have refuted this concept of authority , as the Lakota society was highly decentralized . Lakota bands and their elders made individual decisions , including whether to wage war .

= = The Great Sioux War of 1876 = =

Sitting Bull 's band of Hunkpapa continued to attack migrating parties and forts in the late 1860s . When in 1871 the Northern Pacific Railway conducted a survey for a route across the northern plains directly through Hunkpapa lands , it encountered stiff Lakota resistance . The same railway people returned the following year accompanied by federal troops . Sitting Bull and the Hunkpapa attacked the survey party , which was forced to turn back . In 1873 , the military accompaniment for the surveyors was increased again , but Sitting Bull 's forces resisted the survey " most vigorously . " The Panic of 1873 forced the Northern Pacific Railway 's backers (such as Jay Cooke) into bankruptcy . This halted construction of the railroad through Lakota , Dakota , and Nakota territory .

After the 1848 finding of gold in the Sierra Nevada and dramatic gains in new wealth from it , other men became interested in the potential for gold mining in the Black Hills . In 1874 , Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer led a military expedition from Fort Abraham Lincoln near Bismarck , to explore the Black Hills for gold and to determine a suitable location for a military fort in the Hills . Custer 's announcement of gold in the Black Hills triggered the Black Hills Gold Rush . Tensions increased between the Lakota and whites seeking to move into the Black Hills .

Although Sitting Bull did not attack Custer 's expedition in 1874 , the US government was increasingly pressured by citizens to open the Black Hills to mining and settlement . Failing in an attempt to negotiate a purchase or lease of the Hills , the government in Washington had to find a way around the promise to protect the Sioux in their land , as specified in the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie. It was alarmed at reports of Sioux depredations (encouraged by Sitting Bull) . In November 1875 , President Grant ordered all Sioux bands outside the Great Sioux Reservation to move onto the reservation , knowing full well that not all would comply . As of February 1 , 1876 , the Interior Department certified as " hostile " those bands who continued to live off the reservation . This certification allowed the military to pursue Sitting Bull and other Lakota bands as " hostiles " .

Based on tribal oral histories , historian Margot Liberty theorizes many Lakota bands allied with the Cheyenne during the Plains Wars because they thought the other nation was under attack by the US . Given this connection , she suggests the major war should have been called " The Great

Cheyenne War " . Since 1860 , the Northern Cheyenne had led several battles among the Plains Indians . Before 1876 , the U.S. Army had destroyed seven Cheyenne camps , more than those of any other nation .

Other historians , such as Robert M. Utley and Jerome Greene , also use Lakota oral testimony , but they have concluded that the Lakota coalition , of which Sitting Bull was the ostensible head , was the primary target of the federal government 's pacification campaign .

= = = Battle of the Little Bighorn = = =

During the period 1868 ? 1876 , Sitting Bull developed into the most important of Native American political leaders . After the Treaty of Fort Laramie (1868) and the creation of the Great Sioux Reservation , many traditional Sioux warriors , such as Red Cloud of the Oglala and Spotted Tail of the Brulé , moved to reside permanently on the reservations . They were largely dependent for subsistence on the US Indian agencies . Many other chiefs , including members of Sitting Bull 's Hunkpapa band such as Gall , at times lived temporarily at the agencies . They needed the supplies at a time when white encroachment and the depletion of buffalo herds reduced their resources and challenged Native American independence .

In 1875 the Northern Cheyenne , Hunkpapa , Oglala , Sans Arc , and Minneconjou camped together for a Sun Dance , with both the Cheyenne medicine man White Bull or Ice and Sitting Bull in association . This ceremonial alliance preceded their fighting together in 1876 . Sitting Bull had a major revelation .

At the climactic moment , " Sitting Bull intoned , ' The Great Spirit has given our enemies to us . We are to destroy them . We do not know who they are . They may be soldiers . ' Ice too observed , ' No one then knew who the enemy were ? of what tribe . ' ... They were soon to find out . " (Utley 1992 : 122 ? 24)

Sitting Bull 's refusal to adopt any dependence on the US government meant that at times he and his small band of warriors lived isolated on the Plains . When Native Americans were threatened by the United States , numerous members from various Sioux bands and other tribes , such as the North Cheyenne , came to Sitting Bull 's camp . His reputation for " strong medicine " developed as he continued to evade the European Americans .

After the January 1st ultimatum of 1876 , when the US Army began to track down as hostiles those Sioux and others living off the reservation , Native Americans gathered at Sitting Bull 's camp . He took an active role in encouraging this " unity camp " . He sent scouts to the reservations to recruit warriors , and told the Hunkpapa to share supplies with those Native Americans who joined them . An example of his generosity was Sitting Bull 's taking care of Wooden Leg 's Northern Cheyenne tribe . They had been impoverished by Captain Reynold 's March 17 , 1876 attack and fled to Sitting Bull 's camp for safety .

Over the course of the first half of 1876 , Sitting Bull 's camp continually expanded , as natives joined him for safety in numbers . His leadership had attracted warriors and families , creating an extensive village estimated at more than 10 @, @ 000 people . Lt. Col. Custer came across this large camp on June 25 , 1876 . Sitting Bull did not take a direct military role in the ensuing battle ; instead he acted as a spiritual leader . A week prior to the attack , he had performed the Sun Dance , in which he fasted and sacrificed over 100 pieces of flesh from his arms .

Custer 's 7th Cavalry advance party attacked Cheyenne and Lakota tribes at their camp on the Little Big Horn River (known as the Greasy Grass River to the Lakota) on June 25 , 1876 . The U.S. Army did not realize how large the camp was . More than 2 @, @ 000 Native American warriors had left their reservations to follow Sitting Bull . Inspired by a vision of Sitting Bull 's , in which he saw U.S. soldiers being killed as they entered the tribe 's camp , the Cheyenne and Lakota fought back . Custer 's badly outnumbered troops lost ground quickly and were forced to retreat . The tribes led a counter @-@ attack against the soldiers on a nearby ridge , ultimately annihilating them .

The Native Americans ' victory celebrations were short @-@ lived . Public shock and outrage at Custer 's death and defeat , and the government 's knowledge about the remaining Sioux , led them to assign thousands more soldiers to the area . Over the next year , the new American military

forces pursued the Lakota , forcing many of the Native Americans to surrender . Sitting Bull refused to surrender and in May 1877 led his band across the border into the North @-@ West Territories , Canada . He remained in exile for four years near Wood Mountain , refusing a pardon and the chance to return . When crossing the border into Canadian territory , Sitting Bull was met by the Mounties of the region . During this meeting , James Morrow Walsh , commander of the North @-@ West Mounted Police , explained to Sitting Bull that the Lakota were now on British soil and must obey British law . Walsh emphasized that he enforced the law equally and that every person in the territory had a right to justice . Walsh became an advocate for Sitting Bull and the two became good friends for the remainder of their lives .

While in Canada , Sitting Bull also met with Crowfoot , who was a leader of the Blackfeet , long @-@ time powerful enemies of the Lakota and Cheyenne . Sitting Bull wished to make peace with the Blackfeet Nation and Crowfoot . As an advocate for peace himself , Crowfoot eagerly accepted the tobacco peace offering . Sitting Bull was so impressed by Crowfoot that he named one of his sons after him . Sitting Bull and his people stayed in Canada for 4 years . Due to the smaller size of the buffalo herds in Canada , Sitting Bull and his men found it difficult to find enough food to feed his people , who were starving and exhausted . Sitting Bull ' s presence in the country led to increased tensions between the Canadian and the United States governments . Before Sitting Bull left Canada , he may have visited Walsh for a final time and left a ceremonial headdress as a memento .

= = = Surrender = = =

Hunger and desperation eventually forced Sitting Bull , and 186 of his family and followers , to return to the United States and surrender on July 19 , 1881 . Sitting Bull had his young son Crow Foot surrender his Winchester lever @-@ action carbine to Major David H. Brotherton , commanding officer of Fort Buford , Sitting Bull said to Major David H. Brotherton , " I , Takanka lyotanka , wish it to be remembered that I was the last man of my tribe to surrender my rifle . " To the Oglala Lakotas , Dakotas and Nakota , " to surrender my rifle " in this context meant " We have killed enough white men with your own rifles so I give this rifle back to you , for Tunkasila Wakantanka (Grandfather Great Mystery) will use a different way to help us overcome the white man . " In the parlor of the Commanding Officer 's Quarters in a ceremony the next day , he told the four soldiers , 20 warriors and other guests in the small room that he wished to regard the soldiers and the white race as friends but he wanted to know who would teach his son the new ways of the world . Two weeks later , after waiting in vain for other members of his tribe to follow him from Canada , the Army transferred Sitting Bull and his band to Fort Yates , the military post located adjacent to the Standing Rock Agency . This reservation straddles the present @-@ day boundary between North and South Dakota .

Sitting Bull and his band of 186 people were kept separate from the other Hunkpapa gathered at the agency . Army officials were concerned that he would stir up trouble among the recently surrendered northern bands . On August 26 , 1881 , he was visited by census taker William T. Selwyn , who counted twelve people in the Hunkpapa leader 's immediate family . Forty @-@ one families , totaling 195 people , were recorded in Sitting Bull 's band .

The military decided to transfer Sitting Bull and his band to Fort Randall , to be held as prisoners of war . Loaded onto a steamboat , the band of 172 people was sent down the Missouri River to Fort Randall (near present @-@ day Pickstown , South Dakota) on the southern border of the state . There they spent the next 20 months . They were allowed to return north to the Standing Rock Agency in May 1883 .

In 1883 , rumors were reported that Sitting Bull had been baptized into the Catholic Church . James McLaughlin , Indian agent at Standing Rock Agency , dismissed these reports , saying that " The reported baptism of Sitting @-@ Bull is erroneous . There is no immediate prospect of such ceremony so far as I am aware . "

= = Meets Annie Oakley = =

In 1884 show promoter Alvaren Allen asked Agent James McLaughlin to allow Sitting Bull to tour parts of Canada and the northern United States . The show was called the " Sitting Bull Connection . " It was during this tour that Sitting Bull met Annie Oakley in Minnesota . He was so impressed with Oakley 's skills with firearms that he offered \$ 65 for a photographer to take a photo of the two together . The admiration and respect was mutual . Oakley stated that Sitting Bull made a " great pet " of her . In observing Oakley , Sitting Bull 's respect for the young sharpshooter grew . Oakley was quite modest in her attire , deeply respectful of others , and had a remarkable stage persona despite being a woman who stood only five feet in height . Sitting Bull felt that she was " gifted " by supernatural means in order to shoot so accurately with both hands . As a result of his esteem , he symbolically " adopted " her as a daughter in 1884 . He named her " Little Sure Shot " ? a name that Oakley used throughout her career .

= = Wild West Show = =

In 1885 , Sitting Bull was allowed to leave the reservation to go Wild Westing with Buffalo Bill Cody 's Buffalo Bill 's Wild West . He earned about \$ 50 a week for riding once around the arena , where he was a popular attraction . Although it is rumored that he cursed his audiences in his native tongue during the show , the historian Utley contends that he did not . Historians have reported that Sitting Bull gave speeches about his desire for education for the young , and reconciling relations between the Sioux and whites . The historian Edward Lazarus wrote that Sitting Bull reportedly cursed his audience in Lakota in 1884 , during an opening address celebrating the completion of the Northern Pacific Railway .

Sitting Bull stayed with the show for four months before returning home . During that time , audiences considered him a celebrity and romanticized him as a warrior . He earned a small fortune by charging for his autograph and picture , although he often gave his money away to the homeless and beggars .

= = Ghost Dance Movement = =

Sitting Bull returned to the Standing Rock Agency after working in Buffalo Bill 's Wild West show . Tension between Sitting Bull and Agent McLaughlin increased and each became more wary of the other over several issues including division and sale of parts of the Great Sioux Reservation . During that period , in 1889 Indian Rights Activist Caroline Weldon from Brooklyn , New York , a member of the National Indian Defense Association " NIDA " , reached out to Sitting Bull , acting to be his voice , secretary , interpreter and advocate . She joined him , together with her young son Christy at his compound on the Grand River , sharing with him and his family home and hearth . A Paiute Indian , named Wovoka , spread a religious movement from Nevada eastward to the Plains in 1889 that preached a resurrection of the Native . This was a time of severe conditions of harsh winters and long droughts impacting the Sioux Reservation . It was known as the ? Ghost Dance Movement ? , because it called on the Indians to dance and chant for the rising up of deceased relatives and return of the buffalo . When the movement reached Standing Rock , Sitting Bull allowed the dancers to gather at his camp . Although he did not appear to participate in the dancing , he was viewed as a key instigator . Alarm spread to nearby white settlements as the Sioux added a new feature to the dance ? shirts that were said to stop bullets .

= = Death and burial = =

In 1890 , James McLaughlin , the U.S. Indian Agent at Fort Yates on Standing Rock Agency , feared that the Lakota leader was about to flee the reservation with the Ghost Dancers , so he ordered the police to arrest him . On December 14 , 1890 , McLaughlin drafted a letter to Lt. Henry Bullhead (noted as Bull Head in lead) , an Indian agency policeman , that included instructions and a plan to capture Sitting Bull . The plan called for the arrest to take place at dawn on December 15 , and advised the use of a light spring wagon to facilitate removal before his followers could rally .

Bullhead decided against using the wagon . He intended to have the police officers force Sitting Bull to mount a horse immediately after the arrest .

Around 5 : 30 a.m. on December 15 , 39 police officers and four volunteers approached Sitting Bull 's house . They surrounded the house , knocked and entered . Lt. Bull Head told Sitting Bull that he was under arrest and led him outside . Sitting Bull and his wife noisily stalled for time , the camp awakened and men converged at the house . As Lt. Bullhead ordered Sitting Bull to mount a horse , he said the Indian Affairs agent needed to see the chief , and then he could return to his house . When Sitting Bull refused to comply , the police used force on him . The Sioux in the village were enraged . Catch @-@ the @-@ Bear , a Lakota , shouldered his rifle and shot Lt. Bullhead , who reacted by firing his revolver into the chest of Sitting Bull . Another police officer , Red Tomahawk , shot Sitting Bull in the head , and he dropped to the ground . He died between 12 and 1 p.m.

A close @-@ quarters fight erupted , and within minutes several men were dead . The Lakota killed six policemen immediately and two more died shortly after the fight , including Lt. Bullhead . The police killed Sitting Bull and seven of his supporters at the site , along with two horses .

Sitting Bull 's body was taken to Fort Yates , where it was placed in a coffin (made by the Army carpenter) and buried . A monument was installed to mark his burial site after his remains were reportedly taken to South Dakota .

In 1953 Lakota family members exhumed what they believed to be Sitting Bull 's remains , transporting them for reinterment near Mobridge , South Dakota , his birthplace . A monument to him was erected there .

= = Legacy = =

Following Sitting Bull 's death , his cabin on the Grand River was taken to Chicago for use as an exhibit at the 1893 World 's Columbian Exposition . Native American dancers also performed at the Exposition .

On September 14 , 1989 , the United States Postal Service released a Great Americans series 28 ¢ postage stamp featuring a likeness of Sitting Bull .

On March 6 , 1996 , Standing Rock College was renamed Sitting Bull College in his honor . Sitting Bull College serves as an institution of higher education on Sitting Bull 's home of Standing Rock in North Dakota and South Dakota .

The American historian Gary Clayton Anderson of the University of Oklahoma published Sitting Bull and the Paradox of Lakota Nationhood (2010) , a revisionist examination of the Lakota medicine man . Anderson stresses the Little Big Horn in light of past successes of the Lakota Nation and the merits of Sitting Bull himself , rather than simply a mishap by Custer .

In August 2010 , a research team led by Eske Willerslev , an ancient DNA expert at the University of Copenhagen , announced their intention to sequence the genome of Sitting Bull , with the approval of his descendants , using a hair sample obtained during his lifetime .

= = Representation in popular culture = =

Sitting Bull was the subject of , or a featured character in , several Hollywood motion pictures and documentaries , which have reflected changing ideas about him and Lakota culture in relation to the United States . Among them are :

Sitting Bull : The Hostile Sioux Indian Chief (1914)

Sitting Bull at the Spirit Lake Massacre (1927)

Annie Oakley (1935)

Annie Get Your Gun (1950)

Sitting Bull (1954) , with J. Carrol Naish in the title role , Iron Eyes Cody as Crazy Horse ; with Dale Robertson and William Tannen .

Cheyenne (1957) , with Clint Walker in the title role of the episode " The Broken Pledge " ; Frank DeKova plays Sitting Bull , and Whit Bissell , George Custer

Buffalo Bill and the Indians , or Sitting Bull 's History Lesson (1976)

Buffalo Girls (1995 TV film)

Into the West (2005)

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee (2007)

Sitting Bull : A Stone in My Heart (2008) Documentary

As time passed , Sitting Bull has become a symbol and archetype of Native American resistance movements as well as a figure celebrated by descendants of his former enemies :

Legoland Billund , the first Legoland park , contains a Lego sculpture of Sitting Bull , the largest sculpture in the park .

Sitting Bull is featured as the leader for the Native American Civilization in the computer game Civilization IV .

Sitting Bull is lionized as one of 13 great Americans in President Barack Obama 's children 's book , *Of Thee I Sing : A Letter to My Daughters* .

Sitting Bull is a major character in Sharon Pollock 's play " Walsh " (1973) , in which he is depicted as a wise and tragic figure during the Lakota nation 's time at Fort Walsh in Saskatchewan . The play is sympathetic to the character of Sitting Bull and hostile to the legend of George Armstrong Custer , re @-@ presenting the General from the perspective of Native Americans as a butcher of women and children .