



Gall, or Pizi, and a young nephew.

Dakota Images

Gall, or Pizi, was a Hunkpapa war chief who kept the confidence of his people in both war and the uneasy peace that followed the Sioux wars. Born about 1840 on the Moreau River in South Dakota, Gall was of humble parentage and lost his father at a young age. His widowed mother brought him up well, but in a youthful attempt to supplement his meager food supplies, he tried to eat the gall (*pizi*) of an animal and thus earned his name.

Gall became a noted warrior, fighting in the Battle of Big Mound on 24 July 1863 and in the Red Cloud War from 1866 to 1868. After the treaty of 1868, he allied himself with those Sioux who refused to remain on the reservation. At the Battle of the Little Big Horn, Gall's family—two wives and three children—were killed in Reno's first charge. Gall directed the attack that then routed Reno in the valley and immediately afterward cooperated with Crazy Horse in surrounding and destroying Custer's cavalry. Gall also organized and led the subsequent harrying of Reno's troops on the bluffs.

After the battle, Gall remained with Sitting Bull's band, which late in the year was forced across the Canadian border. In the fall of 1880, he quarreled with Sitting Bull, calling him a fraud and a coward, and with a large number of followers, he returned to the United States. After a fight with the force of Major Guido Ilges at Poplar River Agency, Montana, on 2 January 1881, he and some three hundred followers surrendered. He and his people then located on the Standing Rock Reservation, where he came under the influence of Agent James McLaughlin. From 1889, Gall served as a judge of the Court of Indian Offenses at the agency. Although originally opposed to the cession of Indian lands proposed by the agreement of 1889, Gall was persuaded by McLaughlin to support the formal breakup of the Great Sioux Reservation lest something worse happen.

Gall died at his home on Oak Creek, South Dakota, and is buried at Saint Elizabeth's Mission at Wakpala. His tombstone gives the information that he died on 5 December 1894 at fifty-five years of age.

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