



*Spotted Tail*

## *Dakota Images*

Spotted Tail, a Brule Teton Sioux, was born about 1823 in White River country west of the Missouri. Although he was not a chief by birth, he rose to fame by proving his prowess in battle.

Although Spotted Tail was angry over the deception of the peace commission in 1868, he worked hard keeping the wilder element of his tribe at Whetstone and haggling with the agent for extra supplies and rations. His efforts to slow down or block the government's farm program and other plans for forcing the Sioux quickly into self-support were very successful. He had a way of turning Washington official's half-promises into solemn pledges.

When gold was discovered in the Black Hills, Spotted Tail and Red Cloud visited the mining camps and listened to the prospectors to inform themselves of the value of the minerals. When the commissioners came to buy the Hills, Spotted Tail had raised the Indians expectations so high that they demanded \$60 million for the concession.

All his life, Spotted Tail worked tirelessly for the good of his people. He was dignified but affable, and his friendliness had nothing of servility about it. He was no orator, but he spoke effectively in council, had good sense, and was witty. He knew the ways of the Americans much better than most of the other chiefs and, thus, did not make the mistakes that they often made.

He was killed by a tribesman named Crow Dog in 1881. The council sent peacemakers to talk to the families of Spotted Tail and arranged for Crow Dog and his friends to pay blood money for the killing. They paid \$600 and a number of ponies and blankets for the murder of the ablest chief the Sioux ever had.

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