



*Spotted Tail*

## *Dakota Images*

Spotted Tail, a head chief of the Brule Sioux, was born about 1823 in the White River country west of the Missouri. He had no hereditary claims on the chieftainship, rather his advancement was due to his feats as a warrior.

After General William S. Harney massacred Little Thunder's band at Ash Hollow, Spotted Tail accepted imprisonment at Fort Leavenworth to save his tribe from further punishment for the Grattan Massacre. He signed the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868, not realizing that he had agreed to move his tribe to a new reservation in Dakota Territory. Although he was angry over the deception, he worked hard keeping the wilder element of his tribe at Whetstone agency.

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

During the Sioux War of 1876-77, Spotted Tail headed the peaceful factions and succeeded in keeping most of his followers on the reservation. In the spring of 1877 he was influential in bringing about the surrender of his nephew Crazy Horse. After the war Spotted Tail moved his tribe to Rosebud without adequate transportation, choosing the best location for his people to camp and receive their rations.

Spotted Tail had avoided war by moving to the reservation and he had hindered every attempt of the government to change his people. He knew that these changes must come, but he wished them to come slowly, not as the result of a sudden social revolution. On 5 August 1881 Spotted Tail was shot and killed by Crow Dog as he was leaving a council.

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