Sioux

(Dakota) Group of seven Native American tribes inhabiting Minnesota, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, and Montana. The tribes concluded several treaties with the US government during the 19th century, and finally agreed in 1867 to settle on a reservation in SW Dakota. The discovery of gold in the Black Hills and the rush of prospectors brought resistance. The last confrontation resulted in the massacre of more than 200 Sioux at Wounded Knee (1890). The Sioux culture was typical of the tribes of the Great Plains. Today, there are more than 50,000 Sioux. See also Sitting Bull

or Dakota, confederation of Native North American tribes, the dominant group of the Hokan-Siouan linguistic stock, which is divided into several separate branches (see Native American languages). The Sioux, or Dakota, consisted of seven tribes in three major divisions: Wahpekute, Mdewakantonwan, Wahpetonwan, Sisitonwan (who together formed the Santee or Eastern division, sometimes referred to as the Dakota), the Ihanktonwan, or Yankton, and the Ihanktonwana, or Yanktonai (who form the Middle division, sometimes referred to as the Nakota), and the Titonwan, or Teton (who form the Western division, sometimes referred to as the Lakota). The Teton, originally a single band, divided into seven sub-bands after the move to the plains, these seven including the Hunkpapa, Sihasapa (or Blackfoot), and Oglala.

Migration toward the Southwest

The Sioux were first noted historically in the Jesuit Relation of 1640, when they were living in what is now Minnesota. Their traditions indicate that they had moved there some time before from the northeast. They were noted in 1678 by the French explorer Daniel Duluth and in 1680 by Father Louis Hennepin in the Mille Lacs region in Minnesota. Their migration had been in a southwesterly direction in the face of the hostile Ojibwa, who had been equipped with guns by Europeans.

In the mid-18th cent., having driven the Cheyenne and Kiowa out of the Black Hills, the Sioux inhabited the N Great Plains and the western prairies—mainly in Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and up into the bordering provinces of Canada. They then numbered at least 30,000. The Teton, numbering some 15,000, were the most populous of the seven tribes, and the Oglala Sioux, the largest group of the Teton, numbered some 3,000. The Sioux had a typical Plains-area culture, including buffalo hunting and the sun dance.

Relations with White Settlers

In relations with the white settlers all the divisions of the Sioux have a similar history. The Sioux became friendly with the British after the fall of the French power and supported the British against the United States in the American Revolution and (with the exception of one chief, Tohami, also known as Rising Moose) in the War of 1812. The United States concluded treaties with the Sioux in 1815, 1825, and 1851. A portion of the Sioux under Little Crow rose in 1862 and massacred more than 800 settlers and soldiers in Minnesota; this revolt was suppressed but unrest continued.
In 1867 a treaty was concluded by which the Sioux gave up a large section of territory and agreed to retire to a reservation in SW Dakota before 1876. The discovery of gold in the Black Hills and the subsequent rush of prospectors brought resistance under the leadership of such chiefs as Sitting Bull, Red Cloud, Rain-in-the-Face, Crazy Horse, American Horse, and Gall. In this revolt occurred the famous last stand by Gen. George Armstrong Custer. The last major conflict fought by the Sioux was the battle of Wounded Knee, Dec. 29, 1890, which resulted in the massacre of more than 200 members of the tribe.

The Sioux Today
In Feb., 1973, about 200 supporters, mostly Sioux, of the American Indian Movement seized control of the hamlet of Wounded Knee, S.Dak., demanding U.S. Senate investigations of Native American conditions. The occupation lasted 71 days, during which about 300 persons were arrested by federal agents. In 1979 the Sioux were awarded $105 million for the taking of their lands, resolving a legal action begun in 1923. Today they constitute one of the largest Native American groups, living mainly on reservations in Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana; the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota is the second largest in the United States. Many are engaged in farming and ranching, including the raising of bison. The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux have a large casino on their reservation in Minnesota, but Oglala efforts to establish one at impoverished Pine Ridge have met with only partial success. Indian Country Today, a successful Native American newspaper, was started at Pine Ridge in 1981; it is now based in Rapid City, S.Dak. In 1990 there were more than 100,000 Sioux in the United States and more than 10,000 in Canada.

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