

## Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate



A Dakota People

Paul War Cloud

## Explanation of Cover and Back pages

Cover Art:

“A Dakota People”, artist Paul War Cloud.

War Cloud, a full-blooded Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakotah, was born June 18, 1930 on the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Reservation. The self-taught artist completed his high school education at the Stephan Mission School (Stephan, S.D.). His art work depicts Dakota cultural and traditional themes.. In 1971, Governor Richard Kneip commissioned War Cloud to paint a mural which was unveiled at the State Capitol on June 23, 1972. “Unity Through The Great Spirit.” The mural currently resides at the main entrance to the museum in the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. Paul War Cloud died December 17, 1973.

Back cover art:

Okizu Wakpa (Where the Waters Gather and the Rivers Meet: An Atlas of the Eastern Sioux) by Paul Durand, 1982

Paul Durand (1917-2007), who created this map, wrote, “The greater part of these place names has been gleaned from the field-notes and maps of Joseph Nicollet, commissioned in the 1830s by the US government to survey the Upper Missouri and Mississippi River basins.” It is a map of Dakota names for sites in the area that is current-day Minnesota.

About this map, Reverend Gary Cavender wrote:

*“The writing of history, that which gets recorded, is almost always presented from the viewpoint of the dominant culture of the time. This is what occurred when the first Europeans arrived on the continent or the “New World” as it was called by them... It certainly wasn’t new to the ones who lived here; rather, it was an ancient and familiar place, a world with myths and beginnings and cycles --reasons why life is lived in a certain way. There were names of places that told what happened here, that described the center of the earth, or the war of the sky god and the god of the nether regions. Yes, this was certainly an old and active world. That was soon to change, however; the newcomers would change all that. They would put their names on these places. Their heroes would now identify these places and the ancient names would fade, soon to be forgotten. Where the Rivers Gather and the Waters Meet will not allow that to happen....It will preserve the past before American history began. Future generations will know there was a time before American history.” (Minnesota Historical Society, 2012).*

## The Unforgotten Storyteller, Artist Dustina Gill

Our storytellers are a key part of our people and we would not know our history without them. This piece represents the storytellers we lost to COVID. This was made as a part of the healing journey when elder and storyteller Danny Seaboy was taken by Covid. Danny Seaboy was a long time educator who dedicated his life to teaching Dakota language, history and culture. He taught at the various schools on the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Lake Traverse Reservation over the years and taught through storytelling. His students remember his classes by the games, stories, and language lessons he offered. He was known to all of his students as Unkanna Danny.



## **Acknowledgements**

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- Many Elders present and past that assisted with the oral stories and historical facts of the Sisseton Oyate

Wopida tanka for the persistence and fortitude of our workgroup. There were many others interested but due to the timeline and time constraints they were not able to join the workgroup. We hope that we have the opportunity to do a second draft in a year or so and enrich this content.

We are especially thankful for the passion of Akisa Red Soldier. He truly is a historian and has researched the historical past through websites, museums, books, documents and more. He has included pictures from his personal collection that he has purchased through auctions and other sales.

We are also thankful for Darell DeCoteau as he provided many books and resources from his personal collection for our Research.

Wopida to those that have gone before us and carried our Sisseton story forward.

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# Untuwepi k'a Deuntanhanpi

*“Who We Are and We are from here”*

*“The ultimate aim of Dakota life, stripped of accessories, was quite simple. One must obey kinship rules; one must be a good relative. No Dakota who has participated in that life will dispute that..Without that aim and the constant struggle to attain it, the people would no longer be Dakotas in truth. They would no longer even be human. To be a good Dakota, then, was to be humanized, civilized. And to be civilized was to keep the rules imposed by kinship for achieving civility, good manners, and a sense of responsibility toward every individual dealt with. - Ella Deloria (Dakota Texts. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 2006.*

## **Introduction**

The Dakota that still live within the triangular boundary of the Sisseton Reservation (Lake Traverse Reservation) reside in an area that the people (Dakota) have lived in since time immemorial. The bulk of the information in the first four chapters will be about the Dakota living here on our beautiful *Coteau Des Prairies* in the early 1800s. Some of the information gathered comes from the notes of explorer *Joseph Nicollete*. This explorer was well-liked by the Dakota Oyate “Sioux People,” and based on the tone of his writings, he seems to have grown very fond of the people he wrote so much about. These chapters will also present information from stories, songs, and art belonging to the Dakota. The creation of these cultural resources dates back to the period we are focusing on. We will also look at master artworks created by the painter *George Catlin*, who visited this region like the French explorer *Joseph Nicollete*.

Additionally, we will be observing sketches made by an American artist known as Frank Blackwell Meyer, who, in 1851, was present at a grand treaty meeting that Dakota (who are the ancestors of the Dakota living on the Sisseton Reservation) were also in attendance. A Swiss-French artist who depicted the Dakota while visiting North America was Karl Bodmer. The resources utilized for these chapters include paintings, notebook entries, sketches, songs, treaties, newspaper articles, stories, and artifacts, all dating to

the pre-1860 19th century decades. The 1860s-90s were the most difficult decades in Dakota history. This first chapter focuses on the period before significant warfare with Europeans in the late 1800s and the region's land features and intertribal conflicts.

The land the Dakota inhabited in the early 1800s was vast and varied. The Dakota who lived where the Lake Traverse Reservation stands today were of the Skiskituŋ band (subdivisions within the Sioux Nation are called bands). This original term was corrupted and evolved naturally multiple times. It is now pronounced by many as Sih-sih-ton and spelled "Sisseton." The Sisseton Dakota were a plains tribe. Although their Eastern Dakota relatives could be categorized as *Woodland Indians*, the Sisseton were not a woodland people.

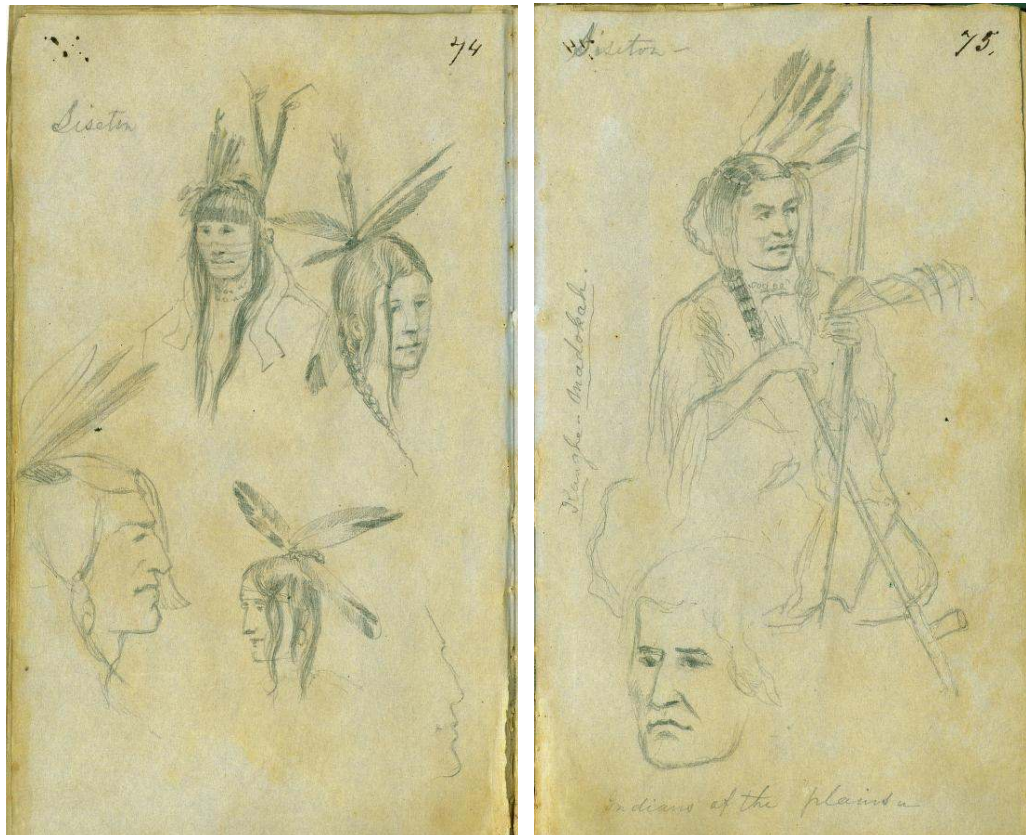
### **Name Origins for the Sisseton**

The original term comes from the combination of two Dakota words meaning Landbridge Village. The words are Skiskita (Isthmus) & Otunŋwaŋ (Dwelling); in Dakota, when two words are used to describe something, the words are combined and lose one or more syllables. This is known in linguistics as syllable deletion. In this instance, the A at the end of Skiskita and the O in Otunŋwaŋ are deleted from the term, resulting in the word Skiskituŋwaŋ. In fluent Dakota speech, words are shortened, so the already shortened term was shortened further to Skiskituŋ.

Further tampering resulted in the K's being lost in most renditions of the name. There are multiple theories as to why this happened; two of the most compelling are that the K's being lost is a natural progression of the Sisseton Dakota dialect. The other reason is that Sisituŋwaŋ is the result of the anglicization (*process of making a cultural term appear more English*) of the Dakota term Skiskituŋwaŋ. Sisituŋwaŋ is the main pronunciation of this term in early 1800s period accounts. As stated before, words are shortened in fluent Dakota speech. So Sisituŋwaŋ became Sisituŋ, which was further anglicized, or to change to English, into the familiar term Sisseton. The misconception that the term Sisseton has anything to do with fish has been dispelled multiple times in literature. One example is in the book *Being Dakota: Tales of the Sisseton & Wahpeton*: "In former times it is said that the Sisseton were called skiskita'atonŋwaŋ." Siseton (Sisseton) has nothing to do with fish but that the band or village was called skiskita en tipi- dwellers at the isthmus because of the isthmus dividing lakes Traverse & Bigstone.."

### Sketches and Photographs of the Sisseton

In 1851 Frank Blackwell Mayer had sketched multiple Sisseton Dakota men. At the top of both pages he wrote Siseton. At the bottom of page 75 (right) he labels them "Indians of the plains"



In two other sketches, the artist depicted Siseton (Sisseton) Dakota on horseback. In his notebook he wrote, "The Sisseton were master horseback riders."

*"The (Sisseton) horsemen...galloped at full speed... their spirited horses flowing hair & agitated drapery & plumes forming a most exciting & beautiful equestrian spectacle. They realize the figures carved by the hand of Phidias on the frieze of the Parthenon.... The stirrupless riders some with their blankets strapped around them their hair streaming from their crests of nodding eagle plumes at once recall the heroes of the Parthenon.... some have features strictly classic & their finely toned limbs*

& perfectly developed chests reminds us at once of the ancient marbles of the museums of art...for at times when clad in long capotes & blankets, mounted with short stirrups & carrying a tall gun, or seated by their tent doors, they seem tableaux vivants of the Arabs of Vernet." (Blackwell Mayer, 1851).



## Photographs of Sisseton Dakota



Siptoduta "Red Bead"  
Gehrke, E.A., Patton, M.M., 1880



Wanbdiupiduta "Red Eagle-Tail"  
Myles, M., nd.

### **The Wahpeton**

The other Dakota band native to this region are the Waḥpetuŋ. The Dakota term Wahpeton is anglicized. The Sisseton & Wahpeton are closely related, sometimes sharing chiefs and villages. The term Waḥpetuŋ is made of two words Waḥpe & Oturwanj. This loosely translates as Leaf Village. The Wahpeton generally lived further east than the Sisseton and were not as heavily influenced by Plains culture. The Wahpeton carried some woodland features but were transformed into a Plains tribe in the early 1800s, and this change is visible in their artifacts.

Below are two photos of Wahpeton warrior Anpetu Tokeca's moccasins. On the left are plains-style moccasins, and the set on the right is made in the woodland style. His ownership of both styles showcases the general fluidity of Dakota clothing; individuality was loudly expressed, and a Dakota would wear any attire they liked.



Anpetu Tokeca, plains-style moccasins  
Minnesota Historical Society, 2024.



Anpetu Tokeca, woodland-style moccasins  
Ayer, E.E., 2019

The Wahpeton were known to be very knowledgeable about natural medicines. The late matriarchal leader of the Sisseton & Wahpeton Dakota language revitalization efforts, Caroline Blackthunder, had translated the term Waḥpetuŋ as “Tea Village” in reference to the medicinal teas the Wahpeton possessed. Tea & Leaf are the same word in Dakota.

The Wahpeton also had a deep reverence for trees. They held the *waḡacaŋ*, “cottonwood tree,” as especially sacred and preferred to camp in groves of cottonwoods. According to legend, the cottonwood tree comes from the stars. When cut you can still see the star today.

### ***The First Cottonwood tree***

Long ago, a star was looking down at a camp of Dakota people as the sun was rising. He saw a young woman (*wikoška*) come out of her tipi. She was the first to



Inside of cottonwood tree branch

stir and went to the stream to get water. However, she did not take it to her lodge. She took it to an elder's lodge. She continued to do this until all of the elders had received water. She then returned to her lodge with water. This intrigued the Star. He raced past all the other stars and was the first to come out the next evening. He saw the young Dakota wikoška again get water for the elder's lodges before getting some for her lodge. He stayed all night and as soon as the sun started to rise, the wikoška would go to the stream. She repeated the routine of getting all the elder's water. So it began, the Star would race past all the others and be first to come out and the last to leave. He started to fall in love with her. One day he lingered after all the other stars left and came to the side of the water. The wikoška was startled and asked his name as she had never seen him before. He answered, "Star Boy," (Wicaŋpi Hokšina). He asked her name and she replied, "Zitkaŋna To Wiŋ," (Blue Bird Woman). He visited her for a short time and when she turned her back, he left back to the stars. Again, he raced past all the stars so he could be the first to appear and watch her. The morning arrived and she came to the water, as the last star left Wicaŋpi Hokšina returned. They visited and he told her he was from a distant band of Dakota and was just visiting. When she turned, he returned to the stars. He knew of the laws of the Stars, the Star Nation created the Oyate. The Oyate could not mix with the stars as it was a forbidden rule, but he was so in love he was willing to take a chance just to be near Zitkaŋna To Wiŋ. One day he was caught and all the Star Nation gathered to tell him of the laws. He agreed to not return to the camp and only watch her from the sky.

One day he could not resist and returned to the earth. Zitkaŋna To Wiŋ was startled and asked where he went and he said he was always journeying around and had just returned. She turned and he was back to the stars. The Eldest stars

were waiting for him. Again, a council was held and he was told he could never go back as a star and that he could return, but not as a human. He confessed his love for her and said he wished to be on the land with her so he could be around her every day. In a flash, there stood the first cotton wood tree, wágacaŋ, tall and strong, his leaves rustling in the wind so she could hear them, right next to the stream where she got water every day.

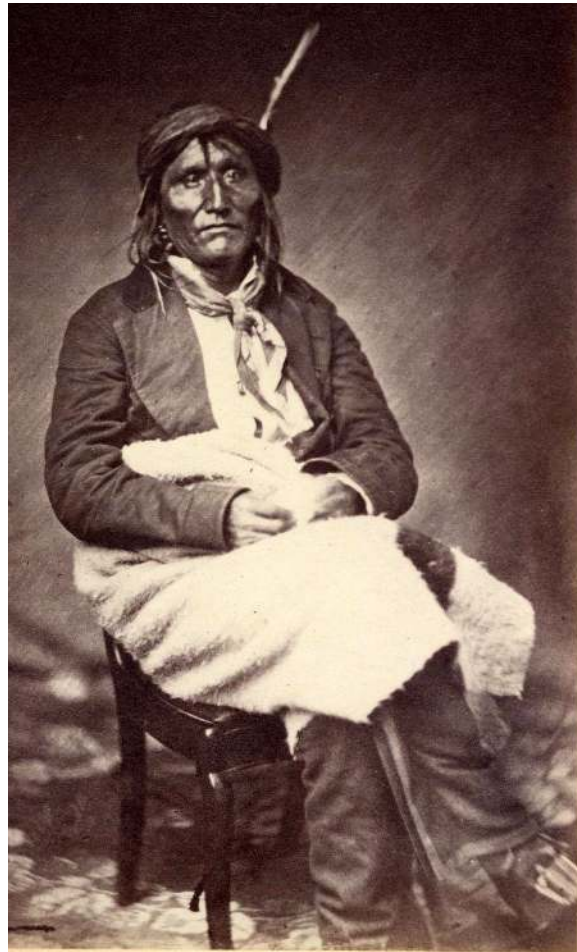
To this day when you cut down a live Cottonwood tree, water runs from it. Its veins that carry the water are in a star shape to remind the Dakota Oyate of the Star' sacrifice. Wagacan comes from the stars and is our connection to the Star Nation, the connection between Heaven and Earth, it is used in one for our sacred ceremonies, the Sundance, as a vessel to carry our prayers and the connection between the Star Nation and the Dakota Oyate.

This story was told to me, Darell Decoteau, while attending a wacipi at Prairie Island, MN, in the 1980s. It was told to me by Jim Clairmont, one of the Porcupine Singers from Pine Ridge, SD. He was whittling a piece of wood and when he was done with the story he gave it to me. In the center was a star, it was from the branch of the Cottonwood tree we were sitting under.

## Photographs of Wahpeton Dakota



Ohiye S'a "Always Wins"  
Redsoldier, A., n.d.



Maza As'a "Shouting Iron"  
The British Museum, 2024.

### **Dakota Winyaŋ Oh'anpi**

Women played an important role in Dakota society. Dakota wicoŋ'an is the Dakota way of life. The Dakota people lived in a systematic and structured way. Almost everything had a system. Winyaŋ is the term for a woman in the Dakota Language which translates into "Wi-Inyaŋ". Wi is the sun and Inyaŋ is a rock. The term describes the creation story of the Dakota People. It is said that a Winyaŋ has the ability to give life so the women are thought of as this way for the Dakota people. To give life is to give the future for the Dakota people. For this meaning the women held high responsibilities & duties within the community.

## **Child Rearing**

One of the most important roles for a Dakota woman was raising children. Wiciyena (girls) and hokšina (boys) are raised by the women and once a hokšina (boy) becomes *Hobu*, referring to the deepening of a boy's voice upon reaching puberty, is when a boy will leave the women and be raised by the men then on. The girls would learn women's roles and the boys were then taught how to hunt and protect the oyate.

Dakota people raised children in a permissive way. Children were never disciplined in any abusive way. It was expected to learn by example and were reprimanded through teasing and shaming. Almost all teachings and morals were taught through stories. Kinship is a stressed value, everyone took part in raising children. Because of this, it was almost impossible to become an orphan. For a society dependent on social order and community cooperation it was important to imbed values in child rearing.

## **Knowledge Keepers**

Women were said to be knowledge keepers. Teachings and oral history were to be kept to the Winyaŋ. As women held the responsibility of raising the children. These values and teachings would then be embedded for the future of the Dakota. Women were to be kept safe when it came to conflicts such as enemy attacks. This was to ensure that the Dakota Wicoŋ'aŋ would always remain.

## **Responsibilities**

Winyaŋ were the owners of their homes and the possessions held within. For this she was responsible for caring for the shelter and gathering food. The women did housework and prepared food. Women and men shared only certain tasks such as making cradles, paddles, canoes and utensils. A man would make his own weapons and thus a woman should not touch these possessions. A wife is highly honored for doing most of the work except for hunting.

## **Other Bands of Dakota and Linguistics**

Another band native to this same area are called the Ihaŋktuŋ. This term has been anglicized into the name Yankton. The "Yankton" are divided into two groups, one going by Ihaŋktuŋwaŋ "Yanktons" and the other the group called Ihaŋktuŋwaŋna "Yanktonai." These Dakota were known for staying further away from American civilization. They remained committed to wearing traditional Dakota clothing, while other

bands quickly adopted European styles and materials. Sometimes, they are erroneously, or wrongly, identified as Nakota. The Yankton band speaks the same dialect of the Dakota language as the Sisseton but with only minor differences. Some Dakota people even consider them two halves of the same subdivision. These Dakota use the letter “N” more frequently than Eastern Dakota and the Western Lakota. The word that means boy in both Yankton & Sisseton dialects is “hokšina.” In Eastern Dakota, it is pronounced “hokšida,” and in Western Lakota, it is pronounced “hokšila.” The Yanktons and Sissetons use the letter *n* in some words but not in place of *D* in the word Dakota. The Sisseton and Yankton **are not Nakota**; our people are called Dakota. Linguistically and historically, the term has been Dakota. “Nakota” is a relatively recent misconception. Only historians and anthropologists use “Nakota” to refer to the Yankton or Yanktonai. Presumably, at some point in the past, there must have been some Yankton and Yanktonai speakers who pronounced “Dakota” as “Nakota,” thus causing them to be recorded in history books this way. It could also have been a case of mistaken identity by outsiders. The Yankton and Yanktonai dialects of Dakota are closer to the Stoney and Assiniboiné languages than other Dakota dialects, so Stoney and Assiniboiné people might have been confused for Yankton or Yanktonai people (Native American Languages of the Americas, 2015).

### Photographs of Yankton Dakota



Dakota Brave  
The British Museum, 2024.



Canunpakiŋyaŋ "Flying Pipe"  
Ayer, E.E., 2019.

*"The Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate are primarily descended from two different bands, the Sisituŋwaŋ and the Wahpetuŋwaŋ, and historically, each of these bands had a distinct dialect. However, on the Lake Traverse Reservation today, the Sisituŋwaŋ dialect is still in widespread use. So, this is the dialect in which most of the entries in this dictionary are written. The Sisituŋwaŋ dialect is a close relative of the Yankton- Yanktonai (Ihanktuŋwaŋ-Ihanktuŋwanna) Dakota dialect, sharing the n in words such as hokšaŋna and tuŋkašaŋna. Because of this, some Sisseton people were previously erroneously identified as Nakota. In the past, it was commonplace to divide Dakota dialects into three groups: d-dialect, l-dialect, and n-dialect, referred to as "Dakota," "Lakota," and "Nakota." We now understand that this is an oversimplification and that so-called "Nakota" people identify as Dakota, and the Nakota (Assiniboine) language spoken in Canada is*

*a separate language. Nevertheless, to the extent that there is such a thing as an "n-dialect" of Dakota, it would be the Sisitunwan dialect. This is illustrated in (4), where Sisitunwan regularly exhibits n where Titunwan (Lakota) exhibits L and Bdewakanunwan (Santee) Dakota exhibits D."*

- background on Sisitunwan Dialect page 4 in the Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota Lexicon.

### **“Who are the Dakota Oyate “Sioux People”? and What are Dakota bands?”**

The Dakota are unfortunately victims of widespread misinformation and misconception. The main reason the Dakota people have been misunderstood is because of a generalization. A generalization is a broad statement applied to large numbers of people based on a few examples. With little understanding of differences, anthropology, or the study of what makes us humans, and the study of languages add to misconceptions about Dakota people. Before answering the two main questions previously presented we must dispel a major misconception. Commonly, the Great Sioux Nation has been erroneously split into three groups: Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota. This is an incorrect grouping. The “Nakota” call themselves Dakota.

There are fourteen bands in the Dakota Oyate. The Lakota and Dakota bands are considered the Dakota Oyate altogether. In Lakota, they would be regarded as the Lakota Oyate. The bands are listed in alphabetical order below. The only band that may not belong on this list is the Pabaksa band. They are widely considered to be a sub-band. They are often talked about as if they are their own band, more so than any other sub-band, so it was elected to include them here.

1. Bdewakanun - Dakota who lived at the holy lake
2. Hunkpapa - Lakota who lived at the head of the camp circle
3. Ihanunwan - Dakota who lived at the end
4. Ihanunwana -Dakota who lived at the end (small)
5. Itazipcola - Lakota who had no bows

6. Oglala - Lakota who scattered their own
7. Oñwožu - Lakota who planted by the waters
8. Oohenunpa - Lakota who had two kettles
9. Pabaksa - Dakota who beheaded enemies
10. Sicanġu - Lakota who had burnt thighs
11. Sihasapa - Lakota who had blackened feet
12. Skiskitunġ - Dakota who lived on the land between waters
13. Wañpe Kute - Dakota who shot the leaves
14. Wañpetunġ - Dakota who lived in the leaves

### **What is the Coteau Des Prairies?**

Coteau Des Prairies known as “The Coteau,” by local Dakota, is a large hill. In the Dakota language, it is referred to as a mountain, “He.” The elevation of the Coteau reaches over 2,000 feet above sea level. Coming from the East, it is a sight to behold. It looks like a large cliff that spans as far as the eye can see. Above and beyond it is a seemingly endless prairie. Coming from the West, it is a significant drop-off, and on top of that, you can see into the state of Minnesota from South Dakota. This area supplied the Dakota with a perfect environment. The wooded ravines held populations of big game animals such as elk, moose, and deer. Meanwhile, the vast surrounding prairies had enormous buffalo (bison) herds. The bodies of water, such as creeks and lakes, held many fish species and were the seasonal homes of many bird species.

*“The Coteau is a flatiron-shaped plateau about 200 miles in length pointing in a northerly direction The northern tip of the flatiron-shaped Coteau ends at Sargents Point, North Dakota, about 15 miles north of Marshall County, South Dakota. The heel of the flatiron or the southern edge of the Coteau des Prairies would just about follow the border between Minnehaha and Lincoln Counties of South Dakota. The eastern edge of the Coteau's extent in South Dakota parallels the Minnesota border. In Deuel County, South Dakota it veers northwesterly and ends at Sargents Point, North Dakota. The western edge of the Coteau extends through Marshall, Day, Clark, Kingsbury, Miner, Lake, McCook, Minnehaha and northern Lincoln Counties. Like a flatiron, the Coteau widens and its*

*vertical protrusion diminishes as it extends southward. Its maximum width is about 70 miles.”*

### **What is Bde Hdakinyan or Lake Traverse?**

The Dakota call it Bde Hdakinyan, which translates to “Slanted Lake.” This is a reference to its interesting shape. In older times, the Dakota collectively referred to both Lakes Traverse & Bigstone as Bde Ipakšan, “Bent Lake.”

Lake Traverse is 11,200 acre lake that straddles the border of Minnesota and South Dakota. The lake has a maximum depth of 12 feet with a mean depth of 10 feet. The Mustinka River flows into the lake, and Jim Creek is a major tributary from South Dakota. The Bois de Sioux River drains the lake at its north end. The Browns Valley Dike on the south end of the lake separates it from Big Stone Lake. Big Stone lake stretches 26 miles from end to end and averages about 1 mile wide. Big Stone Lake is the main source of the Minnesota River which flows directly into the Mississippi.

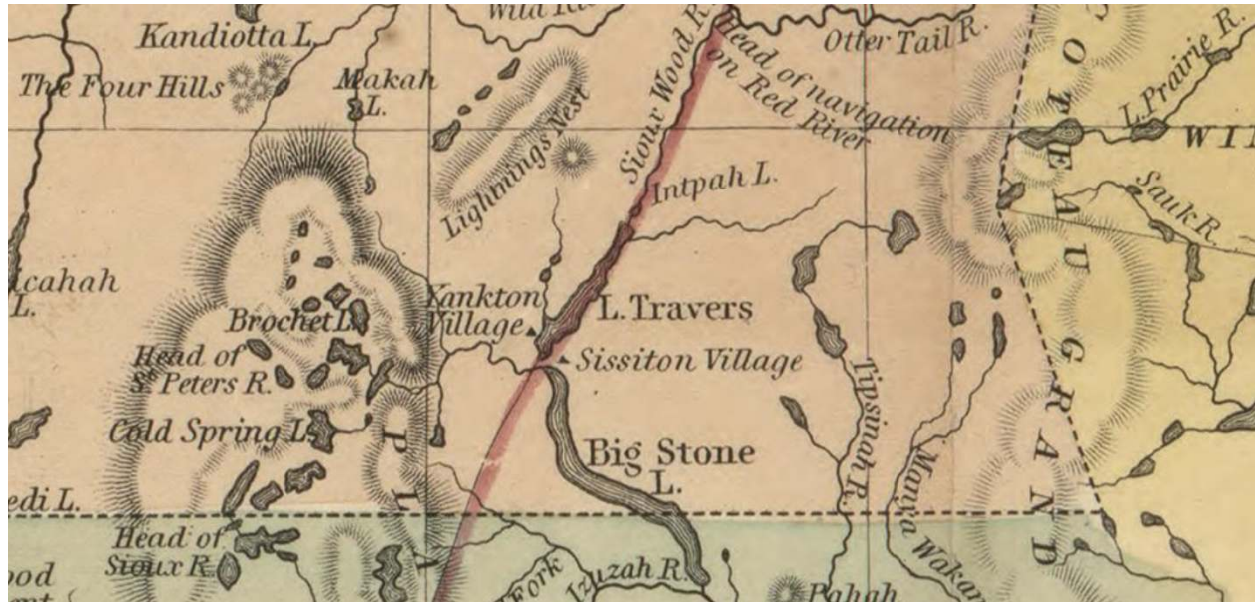
The two lakes together are a very long river-like body of water. The area around these lakes is where the Sisseton and their relatives lived. The space between the lakes is what we call an isthmus, or a *land bridge*, and is the place the Sisseton people camped and thus they became known as the land bridge village. This band had easy access to buffalo (bison) and fish, thanks to their camp location; it also offered them protection from their enemies.

### **Threats to the Dakota in this region**

The greatest threat to the Dakota “Sioux” were neighboring tribes such as the Pawnee-Arikara, Omaha, Chippewa, Hidatsa, Cree, Mandan, & Assiniboine tribes. There are also oral histories about conflicts with the Cheyenne and Crow tribes located further west, and Sac (Meskwaki) & Fox to the southeast.

In this region and period, warfare was conducted differently from how it was waged in other parts of the continent. Plains warriors of any tribe prioritized personal feats of courage and strength. While the outcomes of battles were important, warriors did not have a clear overview of the events taking place, and battles were fought on a one-on-one basis until the losing faction retreated. There were no high-ranking military

officials giving orders, the Dakota who held leadership positions would yell encouragements and lead by charging first.



1852 map showing the Sissetons living on the isthmus. It also shows the Yanktons living nearby, strengthening the argument that the bands are closely related.

### **Migration of the Sisseton Dakota**

The Sisseton Dakota originated on the isthmus between the two previously mentioned lakes. Before they lived near these lakes, they were Dakota under a different name. After they moved to this region, a new culture emerged, the older culture evolved, and the Sisseton Dakota were formed on the tall grass prairies. From the isthmus, the Sisseton spread out in each direction. Eventually, the Sisseton would split into two groups: the Northern Sisseton and the Southern Sisseton. The Sisseton of the South lived near the Wahpeton & the Yankton Dakota. The Northern Sisseton lived near the Yanktonai Dakota and eventually formed the Pabaksa (Cut-Head) Dakota.

The Sisseton (Sisitonwan, Skiskitonwan) were likely the least contacted tribe in the Sioux Nation. Europeans of the time period between first contact to 1880 did not know a great deal about the Sissetons; the result of this ignorance can still be felt today. The

Sisseton do not have many books or other media depicting them. Many of the feats of survival that the Sisseton accomplished are unknown to the world. More tragically, the events of our history are unknown to our own people. This textbook is meant to shed light on this unique group indigenous to the Coteau Des Prairies.

Although there are many tribes in North America, no other tribe has claims to the land on which the Sisseton Dakota have lived for hundreds of years. The Wahpeton Dakota would come to live with the Sisseton. Today, they are indistinguishable. Sadly, the Yanktons (Ihanktunwan-Ihanktunwanna) were removed from our homelands, but many Sisseton-Wahpeton are descendants of them. Along with the buffalo (bison), the tallgrass prairie is another vital part of the region that nearly disappeared. Unfortunately, the original habitat of the Sisseton people has been lost.

### **Allotment**

As the United States and white settlers continued their move westward, the traditional homelands of the Sisseton-Wahpeton were subject to allotment policies. On February 8, 1887, the Dawes General Allotment Act was passed by Congress under President Grover Cleveland. This allowed the president to break reservation lands into allotments (smaller plots of land) with the goal of gaining land for white settlers. Because of this allotment act, the town of Sisseton was formed. Just five years later, on April 5, 1892, the Sisseton-Wahpeton Lake Traverse Reservation was opened to settlers. Earlier in 1892, the government purchased 320 acres of land from the tribe to establish the town of Sisseton. Native Americans were unfairly taken advantage of by this allotment act and the result of it was large plots of land being sold at low values because of the stipulations of the allotments. Members of the Sisseton-Wahpeton reservation were each allotted 160 acres of land but ultimately were bought out by non-tribal members at a fraction of the price their lands were worth.



Sisseton Indian Agency

### **Ecosystems of the Region**

The Lake Traverse Reservation is made up of many ecosystems, a biological community and the interaction of all organisms with their physical environment. Ecosystems found on the reservation included the Prairie Grasslands, wetlands, riparian forest, aquatic and agricultural. Vast varieties of ecosystems available on the reservation allowed for many traditional food and medicinal sources for the Dakota.

### **Prairie Grasslands**

The tallgrass prairie was unique. Grass taller than men would sway in the wind for hundreds of miles. This was the largest biome in Minnesota and reached into ND and SD. "Northern tallgrass prairie is one of the most endangered ecosystems on earth. In the mid-1850s, prairie covered one-third of Minnesota. Today, less than 2% of the original prairie remains." (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, n.d.). Remnants of the old world are in the Sheyenne National Grassland, which is the largest intact tallgrass prairie in the upper Midwest in public ownership, and the Sisseton Reservation (Lake Traverse Reservation). A few spots can also be found in Minnesota. "Less than

one-tenth of one percent of all tallgrass prairies in North Dakota is still intact, while just one percent remains nationwide. No other major ecosystem on the North American continent has been so fully altered since European settlement.” (United States Forest Service, n.d.)

### **Wetlands**

Land that is either seasonally or permanently covered with water. Lake Traverse is home to diverse wetlands including marshes, sloughs, and shallow lakes which are critical for the waterfowl migration and nesting. Wetlands also provide the habitat for other aquatic animals (beavers and otters) and amphibians (salamanders, frogs and turtles).

### **Riparian forest**

Along the rivers and streams, are narrow bands of trees, such as cottonwood and willow trees. In addition, shrubs which included Red osier dogwood, chokecherry, serviceberry and juniper. All the trees and shrubs are utilized for providing shade, erosion control, and wildlife corridors. At one time Lake Traverse had a large riparian forest area.

### **Aquatic**

The lakes provide home to many fish and waterfowl as well as aquatic invertebrates. The fish common to the lakes include walleye, perch, northern, bass, bullheads, bluegills, carp, and sheephead. Waterfowl found on the reservation include Canadian geese, Mallards, Redheads, Pintails, and Blue-winged teal to name a few.

### **Agriculture lands**

Currently, the majority of the lands on the Lake Traverse Reservation are being used for agriculture, which includes both cropland and pasture. This area is known for corn, soybeans, alfalfa, dairy and beef cattle. The runoff waters from agriculture use has altered the waterflow of this area.

“The Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate tribe actively manages the reservation's natural resources, focusing on wildlife conservation, wetland protection, and sustainable land use practices”.

[https://www.google.com/search?q=ecosystems+of+the+lake+traverse+reservation&rlz=1C1CHBF\\_enUS1000US1000&oq=eco&gs\\_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUqBggAEEUYOzIGCAAQR Rg7MgYIARBFgDkyDQgCEAAYsQMYyQMYgAQyDQgDEAAYkgMYgAQYigUyBwgEEAAYg](https://www.google.com/search?q=ecosystems+of+the+lake+traverse+reservation&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS1000US1000&oq=eco&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUqBggAEEUYOzIGCAAQR Rg7MgYIARBFgDkyDQgCEAAYsQMYyQMYgAQyDQgDEAAYkgMYgAQYigUyBwgEEAAYg)

The Sisseton and Wahpeton Dakota are a people with strong ties to the land they originally inhabited. This is evident by their name, deriving, or originating, from the combination of terms to describe their traditional homelands. The Sisseton and Wahpeton Dakota traditionally had set roles in their communities and relied heavily on kinship. They were a communal people who had various camps throughout the midwest region of what we now call the United States. They lived and thrived off of the resources the land provided for their encampments and, in turn, they were caretakers of the land - in all senses. The Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota of the Lake Traverse reservation are one of the only bands to have their current reservation be placed at their point of origin. Because of this, the Sisseton and the other Dakota defended these lands an innumerable amount of times. Some of these events were recorded, and these events will be the main subject in the coming chapter.

#### Comprehension Questions

- 1) During the 1800s, what band of Dakotas lived where the Lake Traverse Reservation stands today?
  - a) Sisseton or Skiskitu band of Dakota
- 2) What were the Wahpeton known to be very knowledgeable about?
  - a) Natural medicines
- 3) What does the term 'winyan' describe for Dakota people?
  - a) The term describes the creation story of the Dakota People.
- 4) When will Dakota boys be raised by men?
  - a) When his voice deepens referring to puberty
- 5) How were teachings and morals taught?
  - a) Through stories
- 6) All together, how many bands are among the Dakota & Lakota?
  - a) Fourteen
- 7) Where did the Sisseton Band originate?
  - a) The isthmus of Lake Traverse and Big stone lake
- 8) What did the Dakotas call both Lakes Traverse & Bigstone?
  - a) Bde Ipakšan or Bent Lake
- 9) Name three tribes that were considered to be threats to the Dakotas?

- a)
- 10) What was President Grover Cleveland's goal for the Dawes General Allotment act?
  - a) To gain more land for white settlers
- 11) How many acres of land were bought to establish the town of Sisseton?
  - a) 320 acres of land

# Okicize Ota Ohna Ni Unk'unpi

## *“We lived through war-times”*

### **Introduction**

This chapter, Okicize Ota Ohna Ni Unkunpi, We lived through war-times, will discuss the struggle to keep the peace with enemies both foreign and traditional. This chapter discusses the various battles and wars the Sisseton and Wahpeton were involved in. It also mentions first hand accounts of these battles and the interactions the Dakota had throughout the war times. Although it was a tumultuous, or disorderly, time, this chapter highlights the efforts Dakota leaders made to ensure that their people's livelihood was preserved to the best of their abilities.

### **Dakota's Fight for Peace During Wartimes**

In the 1700s, the Dakota were prospering, living in the grassland surrounding the *Coteau Des Prairies*. One of the leaders in the region was chief Wakinyan Duta, “Red Thunder.” He was a Sisseton Dakota chief who the Yankton Dakota also followed. Under Red Thunder's stewardship, the land and the people thrived. Animals were alive in numbers that are hard for us to imagine today. Species that are no longer present around the current day *Coteau Des Prairies* were abundant. The Dakota enjoyed prosperity and had immense wealth compared to surrounding tribes. The French knew Red Thunder as Tonnerre Rouge, which translates to Red Thunder. Z. M. Pike saw him at the great council at Prairie du Chien, Wis., in Apr. 1806 and pronounced him the most gorgeously dressed of any chief he had met.

Although he had been a fierce warrior, the leader of the Sisitunwan desired peace. According to Dakota oral history, he had created a widespread ceasefire in his region multiple times. In one instance, Red Thunder went to an enemy tribe known as the Hahátunwan, or “Lives at the waterfalls” or the Chippewa's village to attempt to end an extremely violent war. To display his sincerity and humility, he cut parts of his own thighs off and fed his severed flesh to the dogs in front of the enemy camp. The enemy

tribe respected the act, and Red Thunder's brave deed did in fact end intertribal conflict for a time. The people of the enemy tribe were newcomers to the region.

Red Thunder's people loved him deeply; he had an especially close relationship with his son, who we know today as Waanataŋ. Red Thunder and his son had joined the War of 1812 against the Americans on the side of the British. During the war, the Dakota exhibited many amazing feats. Waanataŋ had, at one point, been shot multiple times in battle but continued to charge his enemies. This earned him his name, "Waanataŋ," which translates as "Charger."

### **Dakota Involvement in the War of 1812**

The War of 1812 was the first large scale test of the American republic on the world stage. With the British Navy impressing American sailors, and the British government aiding Native American tribes in their attacks on American citizens on the frontier, Congress, for the first time in our nation's history, declared war on a foreign nation: Great Britain. Battles raged on the high seas. British soldiers invaded American soil, captured Washington D.C., and even burned the White House. Native Americans played a major role in the War of 1812. Tribes were aligned with both sides of the conflict, although predominantly tribes allied themselves with the British against the United States. The tribes fought along the frontier and along the Gulf Coast; tribal wars occurred alongside battles of the War of 1812. Roughly 15,000 Americans died as a result of the War of 1812. Roughly 8,600 British and Canadian soldiers died from battle or disease. The losses among Native American tribes are not known (American Battlefield Trust, n.d.).

### **Conflict Amongst Tribes**

After the war the Dakota returned to their homelands far west near the heart of the continent. "Red Thunder and Waneta (Waanataŋ) returned to Lake Traverse, where anti-American sentiment flourished for a time". - Historian, Mark Diedrich. The Dakota under Red Thunder and Waanataŋ in the decades after the 1812 war were identified by a new term; this term is Pabaksa "Head Cutters" (*the term is often written as Cut Head*). This new faction of Dakota was composed of Sisseton Dakota and Yanktonai Dakota who all spoke a similar Dakota dialect. In lifestyle, culture, clothing, and, to a certain extent, language, the related Dakota bands were indistinguishable and intermarried heavily. Pabaksa served as a term that grouped the bands together. During the

1810s-1820s the Dakota and Chippewa were in continual warfare. Red Thunder tried to achieve peace but his attempts were unsuccessful. His son Waanatan joined in war-parties raiding the Chippewa. In one fight, the Pabaksa Dakota killed over twenty Chippewa along with a few of their Assiniboine and Cree allies. Small scale battles happened all over the Chippewa country that had once been the home of Eastern Dakota. Earlier in the century Chippewa had fled west after encroachment from European settlement of their homelands. They had initially befriended the Dakota and integrated with them, eventually even out populating them in the Dakota's far northeastern territory. Unfortunately for the Dakota, the Chippewa would eventually ally with the Iron Confederacy.

*"The Iron Confederacy revolved around the fur trade particularly with the Hudson Bay Company and included the Assiniboine (Nakoda and Stoney) as well as the Plains Cree, Saulteaux-Plains Ojibwe, Metis, and some Iroquois people who had traveled west as employees within the fur trade. Other Indian peoples on the northern plains such as the Gros Ventre became part of the confederacy in the 1860s. The Confederacy first rose to predominance on the northern Plains during the height of the fur trade when they operated as middle men controlling the flow of European goods to other Aboriginal groups. The confederacy became the dominate force on the northern plains and was the major opposition to Indian nations and settlers not associated with it, including the Shoshone and Crow further south. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Confederacy had lost control of the trade with the Mandan, however. From 1790 to 1810 intermittent wars were fought between the Confederacy and its former horse suppliers to the south."* (Yack, 2019).

The Chippewa chose to side with the Iron Confederacy because of their access to trade goods and firearms. The Dakota had a great amount of disdain, or lack of respect, towards the Iron Confederacy; they had a history of attacking the Dakota and in at least one instance took Dakota captives to sell as slaves to Europeans.

"In 1741, an 800-foot-long coffer of recently enslaved Sioux Indians, procured by a group of Cree, Assiniboine, and Monsoni warriors, arrived in Montreal, ready for sale to French colonists hungry for domestic and agricultural labor." (Onion, 2016).

The result of the Chippewa siding with the Iron Confederacy was a terrible and bloody conflict that spanned multiple generations. Two Dakota leaders, who would later fight against the United States, told of their involvement in the “Dakota-Chippewa wars”.

(1) Wambditan̄ka “Big Eagle” (2) Wakan̄ojan̄jan̄ “Medicine Bottle”



(1) & (2) Photos courtesy of Akisa Redsoldier’s personal collection.

In separate interviews Dakota brothers Wambdi Tanka “Big Eagle” & Wakan Ojanjan “Medicine Bottle” would claim to have battled the Chippewa. Big Eagle stated that the six feathers in his hair symbolize six chippewa scalps he had taken. His brother Medicine Bottle had before his execution said “I have faced the chippewa in twenty battles. I am not afraid to again face death.” The brothers belonged to the eastern

Dakota they hailed from the Mdewakantj band (The term was anglicized into "Mdewakanton").

### **Postwar Efforts for Peace**

After years of battle and intense grief on both sides Chief Red Thunder desperately wanted to end the killing. Unexpectedly, a Chippewa chief known as Flat Mouth, invited him to his village in order to negotiate peace. Red Thunder accepted the invitation and went to the peace talks. He had only gone with two of his trusted friends, leaving behind his warriors. After the peace talks Red Thunder was beginning his journey home when the Chippewa he had just met with suddenly killed him. They took his belongings as trophies. Waanatanj learned of his father's murder and in a rage he had swept through Chippewa lands with hundreds of warriors in a full scale war. Waanatanj had "amply avenged the death of his father by inflicting repeated blows on the Ojibways" - historian William Warren (the Chippewa call themselves Ojibway). In the battles that ensued Waanatanj was pierced by arrows and shot with lead bullets at least seven times. He survived all attempts on his own life while seeking to avenge his father's. Waanatanj would fight far enough into enemy territory to recover his father's body.

According to Kendall DeCoteau's, a Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate member, summarization of Waanatan's life, "Chief Waneta (Waanatanj) was born on the Elm River in 1793 near Aberdeen, SD. He was born into a time where our people desperately needed charismatic leadership and brave warriors who broadened their spectrums through prayer and unity. He made some good connections, King George III knighted him after the battle at Ft Sandusky Ohio where he killed 8 Americans in hand to hand combat after leading the Charge against the American Cavalry. The King of England gave him captain's commission allowing him status among the British elite. He came back, supplied with firearms at his disposal, along with respect from the British military and the natives who opposed American immigrants who flooded the country polluting land and rivers mining earth looking for a quick come up. He learned of his father's death through mischief and cleared out his land starting from the Wild Rice River near Fargo, ND where he avenged his father by getting back his remains and checking the tribe who moved there without permission. He retrieved his father's remains and kept enemies at bay. Waneta had innumerable warriors who followed him at their own accord. The Cut Head Yanktons and the Northern Sissetons were close kin

due to his father's diplomatic status and immaculate reputation as a leader." (DeCoteau, 2024).

During the decades of intense intertribal conflict, a newspaper, The Minnesota Pioneer, reported on a battle in 1849 that involved the Sissetons who lived west of Big Stone Lake on the *Coteau Des Prairies*.

**The Minnesota Pioneer. Pub. Date September 20, 1849**  
**Fight on the Great Prairies between the Dakota and Chippewas, in July last.**

*A band of Sisseton Sioux who live west from Big Stone Lake, left their village after "corn-hoeing," on their usual summer hunt of the buffalo, accompanied by some stragglers from other bands, which increased their number to about seventy men, besides women and children. Greatly disappointed not finding a solitary buffalo in the former summer ranges of these animals, they were compelled to move further northward and during their tedious journeying, suffered extremely from hunger. After eating their dogs, they sustained their miserable existence for two weeks on the tibisona root, or the navel de prairie of the voyageurs. At length they discovered buffalo; but much dispersed and fewer in number than they expected. After "cerneing" the herds of buffalo a few times with indifferent success, from the continual apprehension of a sudden surprise, their camp was set into unusual commotion by the discovery of a strange horseman galloping across the plain. He rode directly into their camp, and they recognized him with a friendly welcome, as a Red River half-breed, who had formerly lived among them, and who could speak their language. He was from the camp of the Red River hunters, half a day's journey distant. Their scouts had discovered the Dakota camp the day previous; and he, from gratitude from their hospitality and friendly treatment of himself, set out alone, and with some*

*risk of meeting with strange Missouri. Indians, who would not know him, to put them on their guard, and tell them there was a war party of one hundred Chippewas approaching, who were so confident on taking many scalps, and wreaking vengeance on a great number of women and children, that they had determined, contrary to their usual custom, on attacking in open day. This intelligence was of great service to the Dakotas; but they had barely time to make a few holes and pile some brushwood around where their poor wives and children were huddled together, when the Chippewa war party appeared. Perceiving that the leaders and bravest men were preparing to make an onset into their camp, a few of the most resolute Dakotas went boldly out to meet them, and the fight commenced along the borders of a small rivulet skirted with tall grass, through which the Chippewa had expected to approach under cover, so as to penetrate unseen into the Dakota camp. This sortie saved the lives of the women and children but the foremost Dakota, well known to some of the whites, and much regarded for his mild and unobtrusive character,! lost his life, he had shot down the leading Chippewa, and with the aid of a few brave young warriors, completely checked the advance of the enemy, when he found himself cut off from his friends by ten or more Chippewas, who had wormed themselves through the grass. Finding his case desperate', he continued to fire; and while in the act of raising his head to draw the stopper from his powder horn, he received a bullet through his brain. This led to an affecting incident. His son, a boy not ten years old, seeing that his father was either killed or mortally wounded, rushed forward, exposing his whole body to a volley from the nearest Chippewas; and strange to say, he escaped unhurt. Claspings his father's corpse, with a mingled yell of sorrow and exultation, he then threw himself alongside of it and kept firing upon the Chippewas until he had the sad satisfaction of getting aid to bear the corpse beyond the reach of their scalping knives. The attack commenced about noon, but the Chippewas being foiled in their first onset, kept up a mere*

*skirmishing fire until near dusk, when they fell back and scattered over the plain, pursued on horseback by some of the youngest braves of the Dakotas, who had but their arrows left. In their flight, they threw away guns, blankets, leggings, and other more primitive articles of clothing; and to add to their vexation and miserable plight, a party of Red River hunters who had come to see the sport, from on a hill which overlooked the scene of action, rode up to the fugitives, taunting and reproaching them as cowards; then galloped away leaving them to their fate, with their only trophy one scalp. Three of the Dakotas were killed and nine wounded. They took two Chippewa scalps, and captured two of their horses, a few of the Chippewas being! Wounded. The Half-breeds reported afterwards that three Chippewas had been killed and eleven wounded, two or three of whom would die.”*

*The author of the article continues and ends his story with this statement, “they (Sisseton Dakota) will either have to gather together like women in their villages, and await starvation; or, once more mount their wild horses, string their bows, and die on their own beautiful plains, contending for the last buffalo.”*

### **Conflicts With Neighboring Tribes**

While the Chippewa were a major threat, the Dakota were also focused on fighting in other areas. The Dakota raided the river tribes regularly, these tribes were the Mandan, Hidatsa and Pawnee (Arikara). In one battle with the Pawnee in 1855, the Sisseton Dakota had crossed the Missouri river and killed 16 Pawnee. The name for the Pawnee is Padani. It is a reference to a story in which a Pawnee war party attacked a Lakota village. The Lakota repelled the attack but some attackers survived the battle. These warriors took the captured Pawnee survivors and lined them up to be executed. They began executing the remnants of the war party but before it was the final Pawnee's turn to be executed via decapitation, he begged for his head. His capturers pitied his crying, calling him a coward and letting him go. But the consequence of his cowardice was his nation would be called by the Dakota Padani, and in Lakota Palani,

which can be roughly translated to mean “begging for life and his head”. pa- “head” da- “to beg” ni- “to live”. This oral history was shared by Elder Cante Ohitika “Brave Heart” Virgil Takenalive. In another instance of intertribal conflict the Sissetons had stolen horses from the Mandan. In a horse stealing song that may come from this time period, we can hear these words.

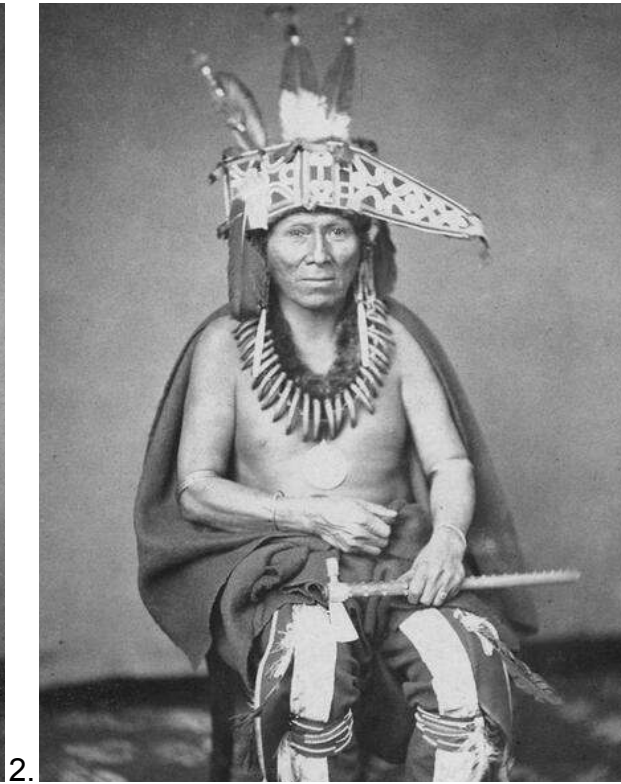
“Tanƙad hinape, tanƙad hinape suŋwakaŋ wan awaku we tanƙad hinape wanƣin duha kte”

These words can be roughly translated to mean: Come outside, come outside I have returned with a horse, one you are going to have!”

***\*Important note\**** *There are many protocols involved when learning a Dakota song. The words shared above offer a glimpse into our past, but these words are not intended to replace the traditional learning process. Please respect this odowaŋ (song), do not use these words to create a new song. This song was remembered by Inkpa Duta “Red Point” Danny Seaboy Sr. Uŋkaŋna ohouŋkidapi do.*

One Sisseton Dakota warrior was named Omaha Kte “Omaha Killer” while this name is jarring and seems too violent to be used as a name it showcases some of the history between the tribes. This name also shows respect, as this warrior was proud to have beaten an equal enemy in battle. Sadly, it was during this period in the early 1800s that the Dakota’s traditional enemies had begun their disappearance from the region due to disease and war. Although the Dakota had intensely battled these tribes they also held a great amount of respect for them. Many Dakota would be given names that were partly composed of the names of enemy tribes. One example is the Chief Mawatani Haŋska “Tall Mandan” while the origin of his name is unknown, one theory is that he exhibited the brave traits of a Mandan warrior, while also being very tall, thus his name may have been carefully crafted to fit his attributes.

Portraits of members of tribes considered enemies of the 1800s Dakota





3.



4.



5.



6.

1. Pawnee Chief, Petalesharo Skidi Pawnee Nation, Wolf Clan
2. Chief of Meskwaki (Fox) Nation, Bear in the Fork of the Tree, Na-ta-wa-kwut, Nesouaquoit, or He of the Forked Tree, Bear Clan.
3. Ne-bah-quah-om (Big Dog) Chippewa Chief
4. Gahhi Ge, Omaha Chief
5. Ikinmair-Cree Warrior
6. Mandan Indian, Me-ra-pa-ra-pa or Lance

### **Chapter Summary**

Although the Dakota people in this region attempted to keep the peace, many battles plagued them. Wartime was not uncommon and is a vital piece of understanding the history of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota. Although it can be graphic, it is important to keep these battles, wars, and conflicts woven throughout history because of the social implications, or impacts, they had on the

Sisseton-Wahpeton both historically and today. Because of these wars, conflicts, and battles, the Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota had reshaped and restructured their lifeways, beliefs, and war efforts. The Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota were influenced by their neighbors and integrated many of these teachings into their culture.

## Comprehension Questions

- 1) When Red Thunder went to the enemy tribe to end an extremely violent war what did Red Thunder do to show his sincerity and humility?
  - a) He cut parts of his thighs off and fed his severed flesh to the dogs in front of the enemy camp.
- 2) How did Red Thunders son get the name Waanatan (Charger)?
  - a) He had been shot multiple times in battle, that's how he earned his name.
- 3) How did Native Americans play a major role in the War of 1812
  - a) Tribes predominantly allied themselves with the British against the United States.
- 4) Why did the Chippewa choose to side with the Iron Confederacy?
  - a) Because of their access to trade goods and firearms.
- 5) Why did the Dakotas hate the Iron Confederacy?
  - a) They had a history of attacking the Dakotas and in one instance took Dakota's captives and sold them as slaves.
- 6) Who were the two Dakota leaders who would later fight against the United States?
  - a) Wambditan̄ka "Big Eagle" and Wakan̄ojan̄jan̄ "Medicine Bottle"
- 7) What did Big Eagle state that six eagle feathers in his hair symbolize?
  - a) Symbolizes the six Chippewa scalps he had taken.
- 8) What did his brother say before his execution?
  - a) "I have faced the Chippewa in twenty battles. I am not afraid to again face death"
- 9) After years of wanting peace between both tribes, what happened to Red Thunder & what did his son Waanatan do?
  - a) He was murdered after meeting with Chief Flat Mouth
  - b) Waanatan avenged his fathers death by attacking the Chippewa/Ojibways
- 10) What other tribes were the Dakotas focused on fighting?
  - a) Mandan, Hidatsa, and Pawnee (Arikira)
- 11) What was the consequence of the Pawnee's cowardice?
- 12) What name was given to the Pawnee?
  - a) Dakota "Padani Lakota "Palani" " begging for life and his head"

# Wodakota ka Wowaste kagapi

## *“Peace and Art”*

### **Introduction**

Despite the hardships of the wars, Dakota people still found ways to create beautiful works of art that highlighted the natural world around them. They were skilled craftsmen and made use of the foreign materials such as metals to create practical, or useful, items as well as ornate, or fancy, jewelry. Throughout this chapter, you will see different examples of Dakota art, both wearable and decorative.

### **Visitors of the Dakota**

The early 1800s, while stained by blood, was not all war, and contrary to popular belief, the Dakota did not solely thrive off of conflict. In many instances, debatably the majority, the Dakota avoided major conflict. The peaceful and welcoming nature the Dakota showed to friends and relatives had been witnessed by Joseph Nicollete. In Nicollete's notes he had recorded his opinions on the Dakota and their land.

“There is something magical about the prairies, the fresh breeze that springs up, the sweet grass everywhere, the blue of the sky, all combine to free one's spirit.... Nothing equals the reserve and discretion of these good people (Dakota) and once they know who you are, what you are doing and that you treat them well it takes so little to make them your friends. I cannot conceive why so many whites blunder in their dealings with them.”

While camping with the Tizaptaŋna “Five Lodge” sub band of Sisseton Nicollete would receive a Dakota name. “You have spirit,” the two chiefs told me. “You are not proud while the others have us eat beside the poor who they scorn” the name they gave me was Wiyukćan Wakan, the Philosopher.” Nicollete had also described the unaltered natural lands of the Coteau Des Prairies.

“We climb the slope of the Coteau Des Prairie and find ourselves and find ourselves in the midst of an immense plateau before a vast and magnificent valley spreading to the horizon. I pity anyone whose soul could remain unmoved under such a scene.” Nicollete had lived with the Dakota for a time and this is how he summarizes his view of them. “They walk only on grass and flowers; they hunt only the most active animals and see nothing around them to thwart their desires; they are happy and proud and believe themselves masters of the earth. They are free. Indians with their private morals, the laws of their families, their customs and the moving language they speak. They are the heroes here”

Three other notable visitors to the frontier who had visited the Sisseton Dakota were Frank Blackwell Meyer, George Catlin & Carl Bodmer. Painter George Catlin had met Waanatan and from this meeting he had rendered a sketch which he would later use to paint Waanatan's likeness multiple times. One of Waanatan's shirts still exists in the Scottish Museum. The art that the Dakota created varied greatly. The Dakota used nearly any material they were exposed to; to create art.



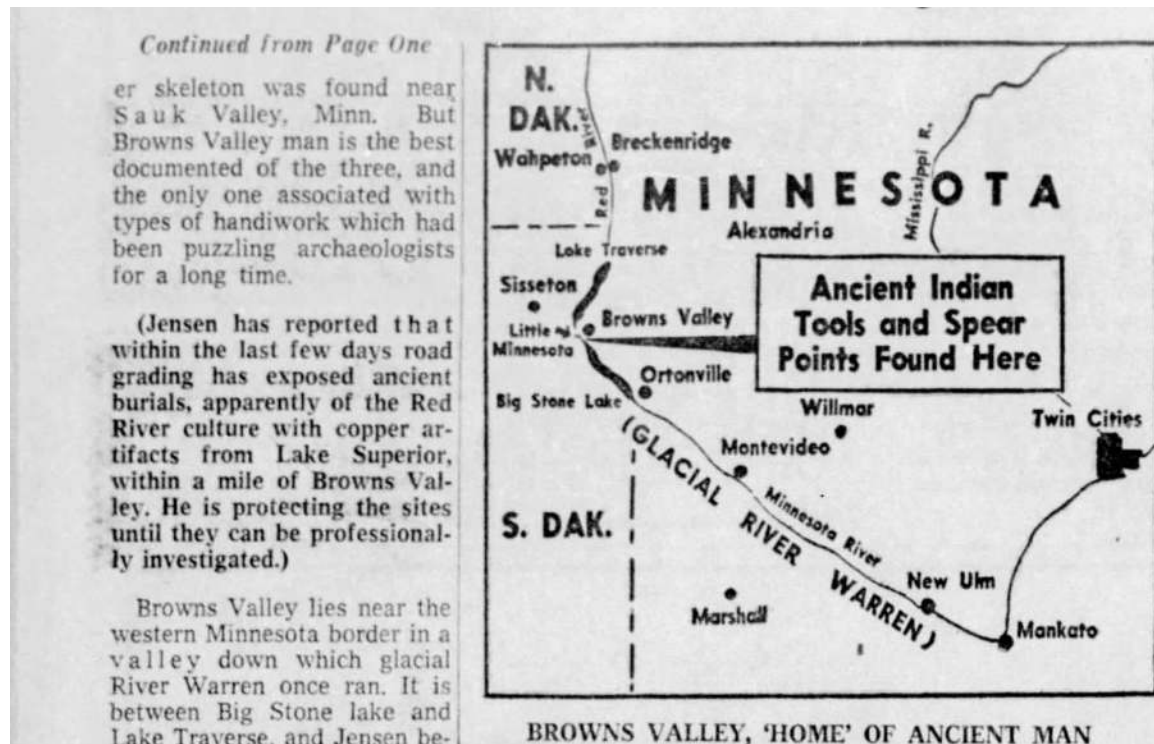


Paintings of Suseton (Sisseton) Chief Waanatanj the painting also depicts his daughter and a famous warrior of the Suseton (Sisseton) band. The warrior is unfortunately unknown.

### **Other Materials Used for Art**

One aspect of Dakota craftsmanship that has been mostly lost to time was the pre-European contact use of metal. Dakota used copper to make shining jewelry or copper pointed weapons. Near Sioux Falls, SD, in Minnehaha County, (a county that has a Dakota name), there is a historic marker that is placed where a copper knife had been found. The inscription reads, "For several thousand years ancient peoples quarried veins of pure copper in the Lake Superior area. First, they built fires next to exposed raw copper to loosen it from bedrock. Next, they used handheld stone mauls to dislodge chunks of copper that were then pounded and shaped into weapons, ceremonial goods, and tools. In 1960 while digging a drainage ditch about 300 yards south of this spot, local contractor, Louie Heidebrink, discovered a shiny, seven-inch, crescent-shaped copper knife buried 12 feet below ground level. Tests estimated the knife's origin to be about 500 A.D. Once used to scrape the hides of buffalo and other animals, it is one of the oldest artifacts ever found in Minnehaha County. Copper goods were highly prized in the transcontinental trade network among early peoples."

While the original owner of the knife may have been from another tribe, the creation of the knife, the trade route it was carried upon or the mining of the knife's resources, would likely have been influenced by the Dakota. Another piece of evidence comes from an article included in the Minneapolis Star in 1956. Along with the article stating copper had been found in the immediate area, is a diagram which shows an arrow pointing towards the isthmus the Sisseton originated from.



Map from Minneapolis Star newspaper 1956

"Jenson has reported that within the last few days road grading has exposed ancient burials, apparently of the Red River culture with copper artifacts from lake superior, within a mile of browns valley." There are also many copper artifacts found in Minnesota. Another type of resource we can look to are artworks of Dakota people. Some of the paintings, drawings and photographs of Dakota people show jewelry that may be copper. Sometime between 1832-34 the artist Karl Bodmer painted a Dakota warrior of the Yanktonan (Ihanktuwajna) band. This painting depicts the warrior

wearing multiple pieces of gold colored jewelry that may be copper.



Notice the ornaments in the hair and the metal bands near his elbows. There are also sketches made by Frank Blackwell Meyer that may depict Dakota wearing copper jewelry but it is unclear which materials the jewelry pieces are made out of due to the colorless nature of pencil sketches. Although this painting was made in the 1830s there are photos of Dakota who are also wearing these types of ornaments.



Yanktonai chief Mato Nunpa (Two Bears)    Sisseton chief Tatan̄ka Nažin̄ “Standing Buffalo”

Ihan̄ktun̄wan̄na (Yanktonai) chief Mato Nunpa “Two Bears” was photographed wearing the same type of hair ornamentation. While we cannot see the color of the metal in the center of the bow-like objects, we can deduce from the painting depicting the same type of ornamentation that the color is gold or copper. On the right is a photo of Skiskitun̄wan̄ (Sisseton) chief Tatan̄ka Nažin̄ “Standing Buffalo” and on his wrist we can see he is wearing a metallic bracelet similar to the one depicted in the Bodmer painting.

A fully copper tool was found in the vicinity of fort Snelling in 1973. A fully metal instrument such as this would have been extremely valuable in its time. The object may

have been used as a knife, or it may also have been fashioned to a willow shaft to be used as a spearhead.



Copper tool that dates from 8,500 to 3,000 years ago recovered from Historic Fort Snelling in 1973. (Minnesota Historical Society/The Minnesota Star Tribune)

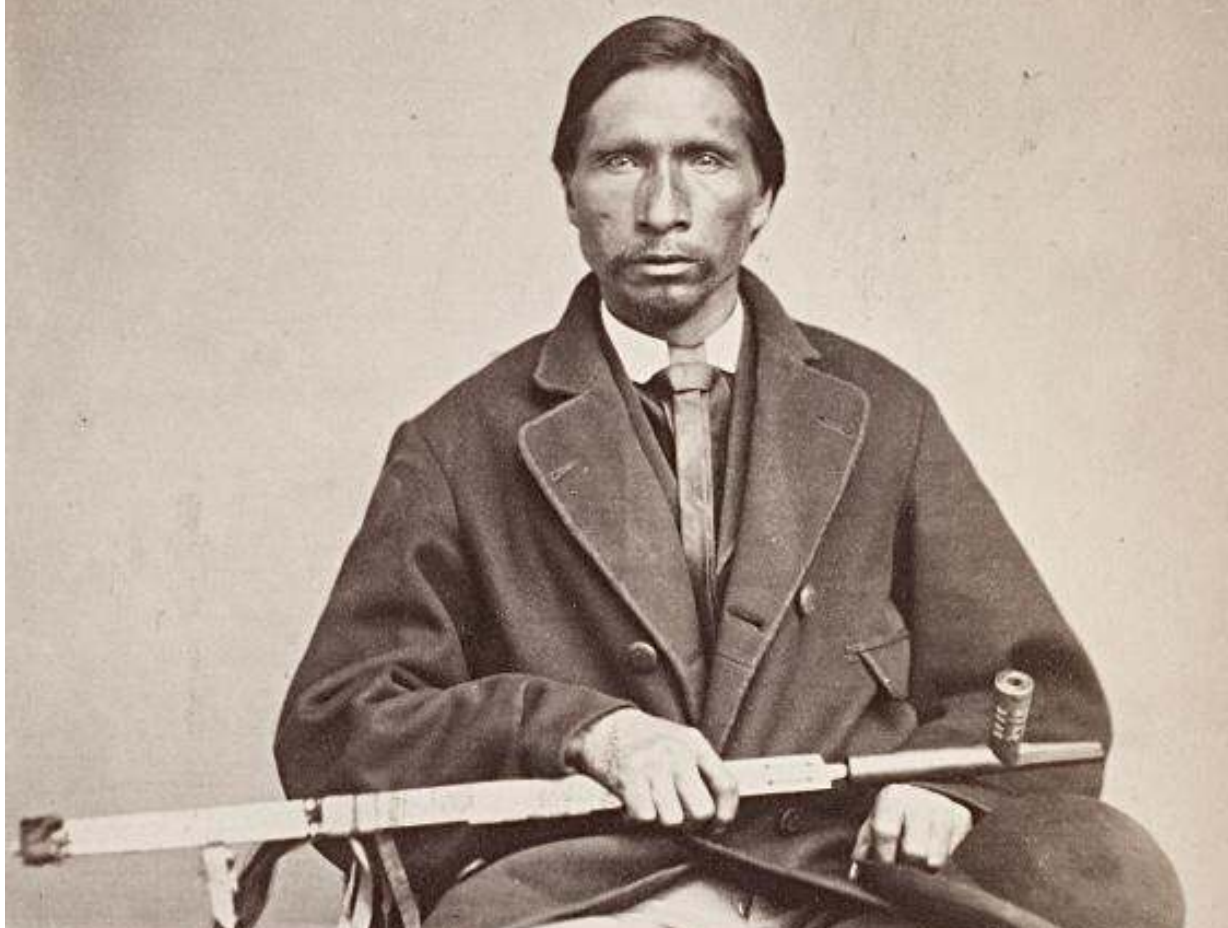
The Dakota were also very good at carving stone. The stone that they most often used was Catlinite (commonly called pipestone), which is a red stone that the Dakota consider to be very sacred. Many Native Americans believe it is the blood and flesh of their ancestors. “We finally arrive in the valley of the famous red stone, which is sought after by all the tribes of the north. It lies within the territory of the Sisseton” - Joseph Nicollete

The Dakota use this stone to create pipe bowls. They believe the smoke then carries their prayers to the Creator. The Dakota had access to metal but it was a very valuable material and so it was not used more than stone. The Dakota used stone very

frequently to create their tools. One stone instrument is known as a pipe bowl. A pipe bowl is used in combination with a pipe stem to create the Caṅnuṅpa “pipe”. The Dakota people used these Caṅnuṅpa in various ceremonies. They each cared deeply for their own personal Caṅnuṅpa. The stone used to create pipe (catlinite) was considered to be the physical embodiment of the Dakota’s ancient ancestors. The stone was and still is considered sacred. The Dakota of all bands carved their pipe bowls very skillfully. One of the oldest Sisitunwanj (Sisseton) pipe bowls had been received by Dr. Nathan Sturges Jarvis, sometime between 1833 and 1836. The pipe bowl may have been given to him in exchange for his medical services.



Sisseton, Sioux. *Inlaid Pipe Bowl with Two Faces*, early 19th century. Catlinite (pipestone), lead, 3 x 5 x 3 in. (7.6 x 12.7 x 7.6 cm). Brooklyn Museum, Henry L. Batterman Fund and the Frank Sherman Benson Fund, 50.67.104. Creative Commons-BY (Photo: Brooklyn Museum,



Sisitunŋwaŋ Dakota, Akicita Naŋiŋ “Standing Soldier”, was with the 1867 Dakota delegation. He had gone to Washington to help lobby for his people. While not wearing traditional clothing (Most likely to appeal to law makers by appearing civilized) he was still photographed holding his caŋnuŋpa.

Another way the Dakota created art was through painting on hides. They used tanned hides of deer and buffalo to create robes or clothing. Many of the designs

painted represented stories or events.



Buffalo robe painted with human figures, horses, and buffalo. Made by Dakota people during the late nineteenth century.

They also used quills from porcupines and in some cases birds to create artwork. This art is called quillwork. The quills, after extraction, are flattened, dyed, and wrapped securely to an underlying material. In many instances quillwork and painting were used side by side. This is displayed in the shirt below. This shirt belonged to the Sisseton (Sisseton) Chief Waanatan "Charger" it has quillwork going down both arms as well as strips going down the front of the shirt on the shoulders and a large quilled circle in the center. The shirt is older than 1820. The shirt displays the war deeds of Waanatan through pictographs.



Shirt, part of a chief's costume, of buckskin with painted decoration and quill embroidery, associated with Chief Wanatak: North America, USA or Canada, Plains, Sioux or Gros Ventre or Assiniboine, early 19th century



Sisitonwan Dakota (Sisseton Sioux) hair ornament

The hair ornament shown below the Waanatan shirt is what the Dakota call a wapegnaka (some dialects may call it Wapehnaka). It is a quilled strip that is tied to the hair. The object of Dakota clothing is to have movement, the many fringes and the hair attached to the end of the wapegnaka as well as Waanatan's sleeves would blow in the wind creating a natural movement within the regalia. The wapegnaka seen above and the shirt and pants seen below are artifacts originating from the Sisseton.



Sioux buckskin shirt, early 19th century. Brooklyn Museum.

Sioux pair of buckskin leggings, early 19th century. Brooklyn Museum.



Sisseton Dakota Man Wakanj Wayakapi “They witnessed his holiness”

Wearing a quilled shirt.



(Left) Photo of a Wahpetunwan (Wahpeton) Medicine pouch depicting a chief with a large war bonnet. (Right) Wamni Omni Maza “Iron Whirlwind” wearing the style of headdress that the beadwork is depicting. Wamni Omni Maza has been identified as Wahpeton.

After beads were introduced, the Dakota started to create masterworks using this new medium. Initially, they beaded similar designs to their quillwork designs but beads were not as restricting (and a lot easier to work with). The designs of Dakota became

bolder. Glass beads enabled them to create artworks using colors that were difficult to create using natural pigments. Below is a Wahpetunwan (Wahpeton) woman's dress. The top half of the dress is completely beaded aside from the fringes. The dress itself is made of tanned deer hide known as buckskin.



The Dakota even used their own bodies to create artwork. The area that was most often painted was the face. Sometimes the Dakota painted their arms, legs and chests. For the Sisitunwan (Sisseton) many of their centuries old designs still exist. Below is a sketch from 1851 that depicts a Sisseton man with white lines painted on his face with his eye being the center. Towards the bottom of the sketch is written "White paint". The man photographed in the center is Sisitunwan Chief Tatarŋka Nažin "Standing Buffalo", he wears a similar paint. On the right is Wakinyan Tatarŋka "Thunder Bull" Jonah Jackson, a Sisitunwan traditional dancer who also uses the design.





Cradle covers were usually made by the relatives of the child, and given to the mother to use when the baby arrives. Cradles play an important function because it nestles the child, and the cradle can be worn on the mother's back, or put on the side of a horse. Highly decorated ones are especially prized because it is symbolic of the pride and love of the child, and illustrates the skill of the artist. This porcupine quilled cradle cover is an excellent example of Dakota work. It features elaborate floral designs and animals. Elk, buffalo, dragonflies, and butterflies can be found. The artist who created this masterpiece had an exceptional command of quillworking, illustrated by the graceful portrayal of the birds.

*“Whether accomplishing the seasonal tasks of gathering, preparing, and storing foods or the daily tasks of preparing meals, caring for young children, and tending the family's shelter, Dakota women and their tiospaye were surrounded by the fruits of women's productive and creative work-clothing, baby carriers, and much more. Because their livelihood took them away from their dwellings to*

*gather and prepare foods, the Dakota needed to be able to carry tools and equipment. Because both women and men periodically left their communities for spiritual reasons—men for their hambdeciya, vision quest, and women for their menses—they needed to be able to transport their own personal necessities. As a result, Dakota women produced not only large parfleche bags but also knife sheathes, tool cases, medicine pouches, and pouches for flints, tobacco, and a pipe. All were designed with straps and strap slits to enable convenient wearing on the body. Each carrier also became a canvas for a woman to practice her art.” (Colette, 2012).*



Parfleche is made of painted rawhide. Artist Unknown



Eastern, Sioux. *Knife and Sheath*, early 19th century. Steel, bone, hide, quills, copper, cloth, knife in sheath. The artist is unknown.

## **Conclusion**

The Sisseton and Wahpeton were skilled artists. They had unique designs that were influenced by their natural surroundings. Dakota artwork was used for more than just decoration. Their artwork was practical and useful in either ceremonial ways or for daily use. The Dakota used stone, flint, natural dyes, and quills from animals but, the Dakota used more than just natural resources to create their artwork. They were also very skilled in metal work and used metals to create both hair accessories as well as useful tools. However, the most creative artwork often came in forms of painting their bodies. Dakota people painted almost all areas of their bodies, from their arms, face, legs, and chests. They were able to create meaningful and useful pieces of art that artists still draw inspiration from even today.

Comprehension Questions

- 1) What was the name of the camp where Nicollete received his Dakota name?
  - a) Tizaptaŋna “five lodge”
- 2) What name did they give him?
  - a) Wiyukcaŋ Wakaŋ “The Philosopher”
- 3) What message do you think Nicollete is trying to give when he’s exploring the Coteau Des Prairies?
- 4) What medal did the Dakotas use to make weapons and jewelry?
  - a) Copper
- 5) Where is the historical marker located where they found a copper knife dated back to 500 A.D.
  - a) Near Sioux Falls SD (Minnehaha County)
- 6) In the Minneapolis star in 1956 it states copper had been found near in an immediate area, what area was it found in?
  - a) Within a mile from Browns Valley
- 7) What is the significance of copper jewelry?
- 8) Dakotas were also good at what?
  - a) Carving stone
- 9) What stone did they use often?
  - a) Catlinte (pipestone)
- 10) Why do you think Dakotas considered this stone to be very sacred?
  - a) Accept answers which include legends or support spirituality
- 11) What other forms of art did Dakota people do? What types of media did they use?
  - a) Painting, carving, beading, quilling.
  - b) Quills, beads, quills, stone and copper

# Okicize Tanka kin

## *“The Big War”*

### **Introduction**

Prior to this time, the rising tensions between the Dakota people and the United States government were building due to westward expansion. In the years leading up to the war in 1862 there had been a great deal of dissatisfaction over the government's treatment of the Dakota. In the Dakota's far eastern territories in Minnesota settlers had begun to encroach on Dakota land in large numbers. They had quickly outpopulated the Dakota tribes' own population. Before there were any widespread violent intentions, the Dakota had first sought peace with the Americans. There were multiple treaties made that the Dakota thought would guarantee peace with this new emerging world power.

### **Rising Tensions Between the Dakota and the U.S.**

The first treaties signed by the Dakota tribes came in 1805 when the Dakota signed a treaty with Zebulon Pike that gave the US government a significant amount of land where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet. (U.S. Dakota War, n.d.). In 1825, the tribe agreed to define its borders, along with several other tribes, at a meeting at Prairie du Chien, what is now western Wisconsin. This would make it easier for the government to purchase tribal lands in the future. Between 1837 and 1858, the Dakota tribes agreed to a series of treaties that included the Traverse des Sioux and Mendota Treaties of 1851, that exchanged Dakota land for necessary items such as income and food. (University of Minnesota, n.d.). At the same time, the US government passed a number of policies encouraging settlement along the western frontier, including the creation of the state of Minnesota. Eventually, the Civil War meant the US government had fallen seriously behind on its payments and delivery of food, leaving the Dakota on the verge of starvation. This, combined with an influx of American settlers, meant the Dakota had no way of feeding themselves. The situation would come to a head in the summer of 1862.

The Dakota in the east had agreed to move to a reservation in western Minnesota. There they had been promised annuities and goods from the government to

sustain themselves. Unfortunately the payment and food rations were not delivered to the Dakota. In many instances the goods promised were taken by corrupt traders before they could reach the Dakota. This led to widespread starvation. This lack of food affected the young children and the elderly most severely. Dakota people began to die, and strong warriors began to grow frail. The once proud and feared Dakota had diplomatically elected to live in peace and agreed to treaties, now they lived in a terrible way. The hate in the young men's hearts grew fast.

“Treaties such as the Treaty of Traverse de Sioux in 1851 stripped the Dakota of their land culture and ways of life. Treaties were agreements that moved the Dakota onto reservations while offering them annuities goods and services. However payment of annuities was often delayed withheld or stolen by means of fraud or avarice traders. Also the Dakota were forced to take up farming and to give up their traditional ways of dress, speech, religion, and living. This forced assimilation along with corruption and fraud led to the wretched conditions that eventually broke out in war.” Historian Colin Mistful

### **Sisseton Involvement in the Dakota War of 1862**

While this was happening to their eastern relatives, the Sisseton still lived in the regions around the Coteau des Prairies. They were less affected by the non-payment of annuities and most did not live on the reservation in Minnesota. When the issues plaguing the eastern bands were discussed, war with the Americans was talked about but the Sisseton and Wahpeton would not agree to a full on assault. Bishop Henry B. Whipple had spoken about the Sisseton & Wahpeton “I had known the Sisseton and Wahpeton Sioux before the Minnesota Massacre; they were then one of the finest body of Indians that I ever knew.”

During this time the Sisseton were very occupied by their need to hunt Tatanka (Bison). They were also plagued by their ongoing wars with neighboring tribes. They were on the verge of starvation themselves, the buffalo had begun to disappear from the Dakota's lands due to over hunting by white and metis hunters. By July of 1862, 779 lodges of Sisseton, Yanktonai & Cut Head Dakota who had come into the upper agency from the plains requested the annuities they were promised. Although the Yanktonai and Cut Head did not sign any treaties they did not see themselves as completely

separate from the other Dakota bands, they especially hadn't seen themselves as separate from the Sisseton (Sisseton) who had signed the 1858 Treaty with the Dakota. While at the agency two Wahpeton (Wahpeton) Dakota were killed by the Chippewa and so a war party of 1,500 warriors was raised to avenge the slain Dakota.

On August 2nd, 1862, The New Ulm Pioneer reported that on Big Stone Lake a Dakota woman and two children were murdered, and a farmer Indian and his son were shot by Ojibways and 150 Dakotas set out immediately to pursue the enemy.

In the coming days, the traders would not open the warehouse for the large coalition of plains Dakota. The head chief of the Sisseton Tatanka Nažin, "Standing Buffalo", advocated for peace but the other chiefs reasoned that because they had lived through six weeks in semi-starvation as a result of broken promises they could attack the warehouses and take what was rightfully theirs. Author Mark Deiedrich wrote about this event in his book The Odyssey Of Chief Standing Buffalo.

### **Ramifications of the War**

The tension between Dakotas and white settlers in this region has reached a boiling point because the U.S. government failed to send annuity payments to the Dakota in exchange for the land that was ceded. These payments were promised by the treaties signed in the 1850s. This led to a period of starvation for the Dakota people. According to Mark Deiedrich in The Odyssey of Chief Standing Buffalo, "On August 4, at seven in the morning, 1,500 Sioux warriors surrounded the soldiers' camp and fired their guns. They shot an ox belonging to Galbraith. Then a few warriors (apparently Cut Heads) began chopping at the warehouse door with hatchets and axes. The Sioux rode back and forth for a while, insulting the soldiers, until finally clerk Gorman ventured into the middle to interpret for Sheehan and the Indians. The chiefs and headmen said that the provisions had been sent to them by their Great Father and the agent had refused to let them have the food even though their women and children were starving--the provisions were theirs and they had a right to them. They knew if they killed soldiers the Great Father would be mad, but they had had a council and concluded that they must have something to eat."

This event was called the Dakota Bread Riot by a missionary named Stephen A. Riggs. Three days later the camp would return west to hunt buffalo near their homelands on the Coteau Des Prairies. The Sisseton for the most part were away hunting buffalo during the time that the war broke out in Minnesota. The 1862 war has been widely talked about. It was very brutal, the Dakota leaders of that era were not proud of the events that transpired during the war. They had tried very hard to avoid conflict, but as more Dakota children lay dying as a consequence of their inaction, warriors with hate filled hearts targeted anyone they felt had wronged them. For six weeks settlers and soldiers alike would be hacked to death by handheld weapons or shot down by arrows and shotguns. As a result of the 1862 war, 38 Dakota men were hung for being active participants in the war. This is still the largest mass execution carried out by the U.S. government in United States history. Between 500-1,000 white citizens, people of mixed ancestry, and soldiers were killed during the war. Dakotas lost between 75-100 of their soldiers during the war.

The opportunity to kill and capture any settlers who had encroached illegally into their territory. They also attacked cavalry units and sieged forts within their lands. One warrior, the son of Sisseton Chief Wakeya Ska "White Lodge", had stolen a horse during the largest cavalry defeat in the war. The battle was called *Battle of Birch Coulee*. This deed, done by a Sisseton warrior, was witnessed by chief Wambdi Tanjka "Big Eagle".



Mdewakanjuntj War chief Big Eagle Sisseton warrior Tatanjka Wanagi

### **First Hand Accounts of the War**

Tatanjka Wanagi had been identified as Yanktonai Dakota and he was labeled as such on his photograph but, as the previous chapters established, the dress and language of the Sisseton and Yanktonai are nearly identical. The true band of Buffalo Ghost Aka Bulls Ghost was revealed in a corrective essay written by historian LaDonna Bravebull.

“Tatanjka Wanagi-Bull Ghost took part in defending his people at the massacre at White Stone and battles of Dead Buffalo Lake, Stony Lake, Big Mound, Kill Deer Mountain which today are considered Civil War Battles in North Dakota. He was taken as Prisoner of War to Crow Creek. When released from prison, he came with the Ihunktonwana, Hunkpatina, and Pabaska to the east side of the Missouri River, across

from where Standing Rock is located today... Bullghost was a Sisseton who then became Pabaska, then Hunkpatina."

In chief Big Eagle's summary of the Battle of Birch Coulee he mentions Buffalo Ghost by name.

*"Just at dawn the fight began. It continued all day and the following night until late the next morning. Both sides fought well. Owing to the white men's way of fighting they lost many men. Owing to the Indians' way of fighting they lost but few. The white men stood up and exposed themselves at first, but at last they learned to keep quiet. The Indians always took care of themselves. We had an easy time of it. We could crawl through the grass and into the coulee and get water when we wanted it, and after a few hours our women crossed the river and came up near the bluff and cooked for us, and we could go back and eat and then return to the fight. We did not lose many men. Indeed, I only saw two dead Indians, and I never heard that any more were killed. The two I saw were in the coulee and belonged to Bed Legs' band. One was a Wakpaton named Ho-ton-na ('Animal's Voice') and the other was a Sisseton. Their bodies were taken down the coulee and buried during the fight. I did not see a man killed on the prairie. We had several men wounded, but none very badly... Buffalo Ghost succeeded in capturing a horse from the camp... I am sure no re-enforcements came to me. I did not need any." (Big Eagle, n.d.).*

In a summary of the siege of New Ulm chief Big Eagle spoke his opinion on the gross inflation of numbers of Dakota the soldiers had claimed to have killed.

*"The fight commenced about noon on Friday after the outbreak. We had a few Sissetons and Wakpatons with us, and some Winnebagoes, under the 'Little Priest,' were in this fight and at New Ulm. I saw them myself. But for the cannon I think we would have taken the fort. The soldiers fought us so bravely we thought there were more of them than there were. The cannons disturbed us greatly, but did not hurt many. We did not have many Indians killed. I think the whites put the*

*number too large, and I think they overestimated the number killed in every battle. We seldom carried off our dead” (Big Eagle, n.d.).*

Big Eagle had not been involved in any massacres of settlers, this was not true for all Dakota. Many settlers of German descent were killed. The descendants of these people still remember their relatives today.

Many women and children were taken captive, and at the end, the nearly 300 women and children, and some men who were taken as captives, would be released back to the Americans. (University of Minnesota, n.d.).

Within the 1862 conflict, only a few battles had been Sisitunwan (Sisseton) led or had a majority of Sisseton warriors, as most of the Sisseton leaders and their bands were away hunting buffalo and opted to hold back their men. But many Sisseton had still entered the war.

*“August 1862: Sissetons and Wahpetons camped on prairie west of Big Stone Lake were called by Little Crow to help the Mdewakantans attack the settlers. Some Sissetons and Wahpetons harassed some Americans at Ft. Abercrombie. About 400 Sissetons and Wahpetons went to the Redwood Agency area to join Little Crow. Some of the younger ones stayed, but most of the older Sissetons and Wahpetons returned to the prairie.” (Big Stone County Historical Society, 2012).*

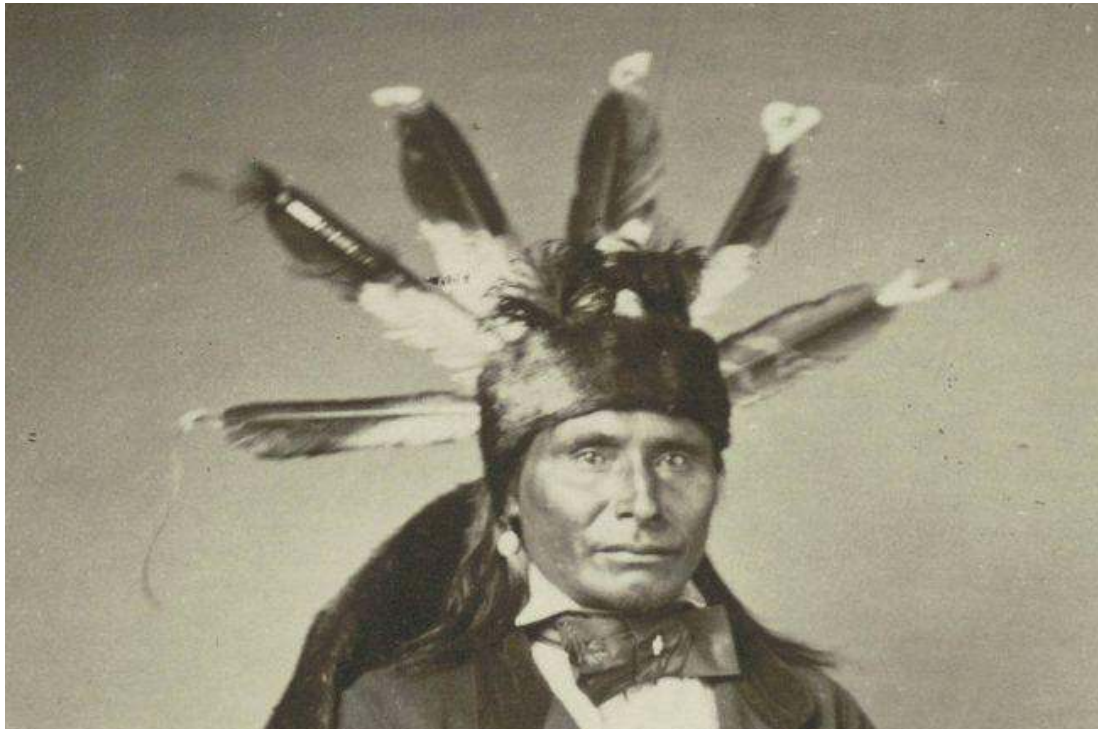
### **Other Events Surrounding the Dakota War**

One notable event that the Sissetons facilitated is the Lake Shetek Massacre, also known as the Events at Slaughter Slough, where Sisseton warriors led by their chief Mato Tamaheca “Lean Bear”, attacked settlers living near Lake Shetek. The Sisseton killed fifteen of the settlers and took eleven women and children as captives. The Sisseton led a series of raids, one being at the evacuated town of Sioux Falls, which resulted in at least two settler deaths and the destruction of the town via fire. The Sisseton also attacked government officials at Big Stone Lake killing eight. Thirty miles east of Fort Abercrombie, a contingent of Sisseton and Cut Head warriors captured a

stagecoach, killing the five passengers. The largest attack orchestrated by the Sisseton happened at Fort Abercrombie, where the Dakota, under Sisseton leadership, had stolen one hundred horses and two hundred cattle along with inflicting a number of casualties. Sisseton chiefs Waanataŋ II and Ojupi “Sweet Corn” were identified as leaders of the siege by the fort's defenders.

Although the other battles were led by the eastern bands it is safe to assume nearly all major battles had a few Sisseton and Wahpeton present, though not in as great an amount of numbers as the other bands. The Yankton too were present in many battles and events but their involvement was not as widespread and some Dakota identified as Sisseton may have been Yankton.

The 1862 Dakota war ended after the Battle of Wood Lake, where the Dakota were overwhelmed by a large cavalry force along with Dakota who had sided with the Americans. Weary of the killings, the Dakota wanted to end the war. Many bands did not partake in the war and a number of Dakota, instead of attacking settlers, acted to save them. Wahpetunwan (Wahpeton) Dakota warrior Anpetu Tókeca “Other Day” is credited with saving sixty two lives during the war.



An̄petu Tókeca “other day: John Otherday  
An̄petu Tókeca,  
Ayer, E.E., 2019

Dakota who had not participated in the war were more willing to surrender to the Americans. Some Dakota had been told that if they surrendered they would be treated as prisoners of war, as long as they had not participated in massacres of non-combatants. The Dakota had two options; they could leave the wartorn east and go to the camps of their relatives the Sissetons, Yankton, and Lakota in their western territory, or they could surrender.

### **Influences on the Sisseton Wahpeton**

In an interview with a Mdewak̄ntuŋ (Mdewakanton) Dakota warrior Owaŋca Duta “Red All Over” had stated that he could tell when the Sisseton were present because they dressed like the Lakota in Plains style clothing with parted hair and braids wrapped in otter furs.

Below are two photographs of Sisituŋwaŋ warrior and headsmen Caŋhdéška Máza “Iron Hoop”. He wears two braids wrapped in otter furs. He also wears a buckskin shirt along with a headdress associated with the Caŋté T’iŋza “Strong Heart” warrior society.



Photos courtesy of Akisa Redsolider collection

Sisseton also wore hairpipe breastplates, this is an article of clothing that eastern Dakota had not widely adopted at that time. The breastplate style is thought to have originated with the Comanche and spread to all the plains tribes. In the photos below hairpipe breastplates are visible.



Sisseton subchief Cekpa "Twin" Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota men Fort Totten, Sisseton chief Little Fish  
Akisa redsolider collection.

It is distinctions like these that show the close relationship the Sisseton had with the western bands. In the coming battles after the 1862 war the Sisseton would fight alongside the western Dakota, eastern Dakota and the Lakota.

## **Conclusion**

Although the Sisseton had little involvement in the Dakota War of 1862, the effects were still felt on the Sisseton-Wahpeton Reservation. The hostilities towards the Dakota people were felt throughout communities across the Midwest. Due to rising tensions with the United States government, the government to government relationship between the two became extremely rigid, or tense. The Sisseton-Wahpeton, however, remained resilient through this time period. They rebuilt to the best of their abilities and were heavily influenced as a way to show solidarity with the bands of Lakota and Dakota they were in support of, further showing how communal we were as a people.

## Comprehension Questions

- 1) The first treaties signed by the Dakota tribes came in 1805, who did they sign with and what did they give the US Government by signing?
  - a) Zebulon Pike
  - b) They gave the US a significant amount of land where the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers meet.
- 2) What did the Treaty of Traverse de Sioux in 1851 strip Dakota people of?
  - a) Their land culture and ways of life.
- 3) What were potential risks the Dakotas were taking signing treaties with the US government?
- 4) Why do you think Dakotas were forced to take up farming and give up their traditional ways?
- 5) Why do you think the 1500 Sioux Warriors invaded the soldiers camp on August 4<sup>th</sup>?
- 6) What did Stephen A. Riggs call this event?
  - a) Dakota Bread Riot
- 7) Tatanka Wanagi-Bull Ghost took part in defending his people, where were the battles located that he participated in?
  - a) White Stone, Dead Buffalo Lake, Stony Lake, Big Mound, Kill Deer Mountain.
- 8) The warrior, son of Chief Wakeya Ska "White lodge" , what battle did they take part in? And what did the warrior steal?
  - a) Battle of Birch Coulee
  - b) He had stolen a horse
- 9) Bull Ghost was Sisseton then became what?
  - a) Pabaska then Hunkpatina
- 10) Which Sisseton warrior led the events at Slaughter Slough?
  - a) Chief Mato Tamaheca "Lean Bear"
- 11) What year did the Dakota war end?
  - a) 1862
- 12) What Wahpetunwan Dakota Warrior was credited in saving sixty two lives during the war?
  - a) Anpetu Tokeca "Other Day"
- 13) What two options were given to the Dakotas?
  - a) They could leave the wartorn east and go to the camps of their relatives (Sissetons, Yanktons, Lakota in their western territory)
  - b) They could surrender

# Minahanjska Tonweya, Sisitun Oyanke k'a Dakota Ozuya Iyayapi *“Indian scouts, Sisseton reservation and the hostile Dakota”*

## **Introduction**

This chapter is about life for the Dakota following the Big War of 1862. Effects of the war were still being felt by Dakota communities throughout the region and tensions between Dakota and white settlers remained high. Key battles raged throughout the remainder of the 1860s and 1870s while Dakota people were moving to find herds of bison due to declining tatanka (bison) populations throughout the area.

## **Dakota and Lakota Alliances and More Fallout from the Big War**

In the coming battles after the 1862 war, the Sisseton would fight alongside the western Dakota, eastern Dakota, and the Lakota. The difference in clothing styles helped the Sisseton remain undetected among other plains bands. Sisseton Dakota would start to be identified based on the identity of their chiefs as they moved west and became more influenced by Rocky Mountain and plains tribes. In some instances the Sisseton and other eastern Dakota were confused with the Lakota as they hunted and warred together. One example is the large-scale conflict between the Crow and the Sioux, many of these battles were fought between the eastern Dakota bands and the Crow.

Immediately after the Battle at Wood Lake, the coalition of friendly Dakota, and some warrior groups who sought amnesty, surrendered to the Americans. They were taken prisoner and most of the able bodied men were separated from the vulnerable members of the tribe. Dakota who were mostly elderly, women, and children were sent to what the Minnesota Historical Society calls a *concentration camp*.



As many as 300 Dakota non-combatants died in this camp from cold exposure, malnutrition, and disease.

“More than 1,600 Dakota people were moved inside... soldiers of the Sixth, Seventh, and Tenth Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Regiments guarded the stockade, controlling movement in and out. It is estimated that between 130 and 300 Dakota people died over the winter of 1862–63, mainly due to measles, other diseases, and harsh conditions.”

*“Nearly 1,600 Dakota women, children, and elderly were held during the winter of 1862-63 on Pike Island, not far from the Bdote and within sight of Fort Snelling. Disease quickly spread, killing hundreds in the camp. In April 1863, Minnesota voided its treaties with the Dakota and sent those living in the camps to Nebraska. Soon after, Congress passed legislation making it illegal for the Dakota to live in Minnesota. It remains a law to this day. To ensure the Dakota were totally driven from Minnesota, a bounty was created, awarding money for every Dakota scalp turned in.”*  
(University of Minnesota, n.d.)

The separated warriors were subjected to sham trials and thirty eight were sentenced to be executed by hanging. Some of these executed Dakota had names that were recorded in the Sisseton dialect. The other warriors were held in prisoner of war camps for several years. Many died for the same reasons as their women and children in the concentration camp. Friendly Dakota who had saved white lives were also sent to this camp. One of the Dakota who had fought against his own people spoke of his experience in the camp.

*“We all moved into this enclosure [sic], but we were so crowded and confined that an epidemic broke out among us and children were dying day and night, among them being [Solomon] Two Stars’ oldest child, a little girl. . . . The news then came of the hanging at Mankato. Amid all this sickness and these great tribulations, it seemed doubtful at night whether a person would be alive in the morning. We had no land, no homes, no means of support, and the outlook was dreary and discouraging. How can we get lands and have homes again, were the questions which troubled many thinking minds and were hard questions to answer.” Ti Wakanj “Holy Lodge”*

The other Dakota who had not surrendered sought refuge in the west. There was widespread unrest among the Dakota. Some bands did not want to be associated with the bands who had committed massacres. They wintered in close proximity to each other in order to be better able to defend their camps in case of an American attack. The chiefs of bands who had not participated in the war wanted to surrender to the Americans, but news about the executions and concentration camps deterred them from doing so. While avoiding overwhelming American military power, the Dakota were still being attacked on all sides by enemy tribes. Some imprisoned Dakota took deals to scout against their own people in order to free their families. The leader of the scouts was named Ti Wakanj “Holy Lodge”.

### **Dakota Leaders’ Responses to the Fallout of the War**

After months of failed negotiations the cavalry, along with the help of their Indian scouts, found a large camp of Dakota. This camp was led by Sisseton chief Tatanja Nazin “Standing Buffalo”. Other notable Sioux leaders included Tatanja Iyotake “Sitting Bull” and Inkpa Duta “Red Point”.

Canhdeška Maza (Iron Hoop), a Sisseton Dakota, was one of the buffalo hunters at Big Mound. Years later he recalled, "One man on horseback went quite a ways ahead and got up on top of a hill and immediately turned around and came back towards where we were, and said that all the Americans in the land were close onto us." (State Historical Society of North Dakota, n.d.).

Tatanġa Naŝiŋ "Standing Buffalo" had watched the two thousand plus cavalry force, along with their Indian scouts, ride up to a ridge overlooking the village. The Dakota were not ready to either defend an assault or flee. The American military had an extensive history of not sparing women or children in attacks on Indian villages. The chiefs and old men walked up to the cavalry to discuss a surrender, they felt they had no other option. To add to the eerie setting, an electrical storm was illuminating the area. Before there were any discussions a shot rang out and an American fell dead. The battle started and the unsuspecting Dakota began to frantically defend the retreat of their women and children. The cavalry charged but was repelled by warriors determined to save their families. One warrior was remembered by the cavalry themselves. A lone warrior wrapped in an american flag faced a cavalry charge alone he fired his rifle as many times he could and even clubbed a soldier off of his horse with his empty gun. The brave man eventually was overrun, killed and mutilated. The other warriors used hills and natural barriers to shoot from and delay attacks. They fully understood the gravity of their situation. Although most had done nothing wrong to the Americans, they were still guilty of being Dakota. Peaceful Chiefs like Tatanġa Naŝiŋ "Standing Buffalo" and Hoganġ Ćik'ana "Little Fish" fought Americans for the first time in order to defend their people. This battle known as the Battle of the Big Mound is celebrated as a victory by the United States military, but the Dakota succeeded in giving their families enough time to escape. They stopped what could have been an infamous massacre like Wounded knee or Sand Creek where hundreds of women and children were shot or stabbed.

*"Several chiefs and elders caught in the open were killed by the soldiers. The chance of a peaceful outcome was gone. The troops setting up camp formed into battle lines. Heavy fighting broke out in a large ravine running from the top of the surrounding plateau down to the campsite .... For their part, the Sioux warriors, by conducting a fighting retreat, had delayed the soldier's advance until*

*their village could be evacuated. This successful retreat continued until they crossed the Missouri River.” (Minnesota Historical Society, n.d.)*



Tatanka Najin

Included in the flight west was the Dakota family of Charles A. Eastman, who was four years old at the time. His later description of how the men fought to gain time for their families to cross the river is applicable to the whole journey:

*“The Washechu (white men) were coming in great numbers with their big guns, and while most of our men were fighting them to gain time, the women and the old men made and equipped the temporary boats, braced with ribs of willow. Some of these were towed by two or three women or men swimming in the water and some by ponies. It was not an easy matter to keep them right side up, with their helpless freight of little children and such goods as we possessed.”*  
(Eastman, 1929).

The General in charge of the attack claimed to have killed forty two Indians but in his own diary he revealed that only nine had been killed. Only killing nine with an attacking force of 2,000 was inevitably an embarrassment, especially considering the number of soldiers killed in combat was higher than warriors killed. Several of the nine Dakota killed were unarmed elders shot in the very first seconds of the battle. After this initial battle the Dakota were pursued and multiple small scale skirmishes were reported. The warriors stayed back in small war parties to delay and mislead the enemy. The Sisseton under Standing Buffalo would go on to successfully evade the United

States military. This could not be said for their relatives. Unfortunately there was another Dakota camp that had been found by the cavalry.

This Dakota camp included mostly Dakota from the Yanktonai and Yankton bands. Although some Lakota, Sisseton-Wahpeton and eastern Dakota were present as well. The camp led by chief Mato Numpa "Two Bears" had not at all been involved with any killings of white people. This band of people had done nothing wrong and did not expect any attacks. The chief and other leaders noticed the approach of the large cavalry force. The warriors of this village were mostly away. They had not expected any conflict and had left to hunt or to participate in religious ceremonies away from camp.



Mato Numpa - Chief Two Bears

The chiefs offered to give themselves up to prevent any bloodshed. Sadly this did nothing and the camp was attacked. In a letter Samuel Brown told of the events, "I hope you will not believe all that is said of "Sully's Successful Expedition," against the Sioux. I don't think he ought to brag of it at all, because it was, what no decent man would have done, he pitched into their camp and just slaughtered them, worse a great deal than what the Indians did in 1862, he killed very few men and took no hostile ones prisoners...and now he returns saying that we need fear no more, for he has "wiped out all hostile Indians from Dakota." If he had killed men instead of women & children, then it would have been a success, and the worse of it, they had no hostile intention whatever, the Nebraska 2nd pitched into them without orders, while the Iowa 6th were shaking hands with them on one side, they even shot their own men" Sam J. Brown to Joseph R. Brown, November 13, 1863. Joseph Brown Papers (Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul). This Massacre sparked an intense feeling of resistance within the remaining Dakota and their Lakota relatives. They would go on to continue fighting, even winning a war with the United States. This war is known as Red Cloud's war.

### **Red Cloud's War**

The United States fought a major war against the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Indians known as Red Cloud's War, which lasted from 1866 to 1868. The conflict is noteworthy for its many raids, for its three significant battles, and because it was a costly American defeat and an important Indian victory. A prominent leader of the Native Americans was the great war chief, Red Cloud, who engineered much of their success. The conflict included several important and bloody engagements including the Hayfield and the Wagon Box Battles in 1867, and the highly significant Fetterman Massacre in 1866 in which William J. Fetterman of the U.S. Cavalry and his command of eighty soldiers were annihilated. The Fetterman Massacre was so impressive that it ranks among the most significant battle victories for Indians in American history. (Winkler, 2014).

### **Conclusion**

Throughout the 1860's and 1870's the Dakota would move throughout North Dakota, South Dakota, Canada and Montana. They were in near constant fight with other tribes in contested regions. In search of the buffalo, they pushed northwest. Reservations that the Sisseton would come to surrender at include the Lake Traverse reservation, the Spirit Lake reservation, the Fort Peck reservation and many small

reserves in Canada. Finally, in 1876, the Lakota, Cheyenne, and Dakota would defeat an attacking cavalry force at the Battle of the Little Big Horn, leaving 268 soldiers dead and more than fifty wounded. After this battle, the last of the free Sisseton would join their relatives on the previously mentioned reservations. The Dakota of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate survived through a violent time. Tka, hinañ Dakota heuncapi - "We are still Dakota".

## Comprehension Questions

- 1) When separated, where were the elderly, women, and children sent according to the Minnesota Historical Society?
  - a) A concentration camp
- 2) In the story Ti Wakan "Holy Lodge" he tells a story about being placed into an enclosure that was so crowded and confined that an epidemic broke out, people were dying day and night. Not knowing if you will be alive to see the next morning, Ti Wakan questions how his people can get land and have homes again. Ti Wakan along with many other Dakota's were offered to become scouts and fight alongside the US Military against their own people in order to be free and save their families. How do you think this decision made them feel to fight against their own people? What would you do differently if you were in their position? Do you agree or disagree with their decisions? Explain.
- 3) When did Minnesota void their treaties with the Dakotas? And where did they send the Dakota people?
  - a) April 1863
  - b) Nebraska
- 4) Why do you think Congress made it illegal for Dakotas to live in Minnesota? Why do you think the law still remains to this day?
- 5) What did the man on horseback see when he went on top of the hill?
  - a) He saw all the Americans in the land coming close to them.
- 6) What eerie setting took place during the invasion?
  - a) An electrical storm was illuminating the area while the fighting began.
- 7) What were the names of the two peaceful chiefs
  - a) Tatanka Nazin (Standing Buffalo) and Hogan Cik'ana (Little Fish)
- 8) What is this battle known as?
  - a) Battle of the Big Mound
- 9) How many Indians did the general claim to have killed? How many did he reveal to have killed in his diary?
  - a) Claimed to have killed 42 Indians
  - b) Revealed he only killed 9
- 10) Throughout the 1860's and 1870's what four places did the Dakota move throughout to find buffalo?
  - a) North Dakota, South Dakota, Canada and Montana
- 11) What are the three listed reservations Sisseton would come to surrender to?
  - a) Lake Traverse reservation, Spirit Lake reservation and Fort Peck reservation.

# Contemporary Life and Modern History for the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate

Despite the efforts of the government to rid the Dakota and failing. Dakota life forged into modern times. Highlighting social debates, educational opportunities and ventures, the governing body for the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, and economic ventures that the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate oversee. This chapter takes us through current issues and ways in which the Sisseton-Wahpeton exercise their inherent sovereignty. It also highlights more recent war heroes that further establishes the Dakota as a brave and honorable people.

## Introduction:

Historically, the Sisseton-Wahpeton have always been resilient in their efforts to continue their culture, language, and lifeways. These resiliency efforts are showcased in the tribe's continued assertion of tribal sovereignty. Regarding education, gaming, healthcare, and language revitalization efforts, the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate is forging paths and continuously exercising its rights as a sovereign nation.

## Education

### **BRIEF EDUCATION HISTORY**

Before the forced settlement of the Sisseton and Wahpeton Dakota bands onto the Lake Traverse Reservation by the United States Government via treaties, the Dakota bands had a rich oral history from memory passed down from generation to generation. A history not written down in those early years, as the Dakotas had no written language. After the forced settlement, the Sisseton and Wahpeton Dakota bands were forced into assimilating the "white man's" ways. This "assimilation" which was a long, challenging, and sometimes heartbreaking journey as told by people who attended the various boarding schools and through oral history passed down from generation to generation of families. However, the Sisseton and Wahpeton Dakotas have endured and become successful and educated people by fighting for their right to survive and learn. The Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, as they are now called, now has its educational institutions on the Lake Traverse Reservation.

After establishing the Lake Traverse Reservation in 1867, the Sisseton Agency was built in 1870 and located nine (9) miles south of Sisseton, Roberts County, South Dakota. The original Sisseton Agency was located two (2) miles south of the current Agency Village, South Dakota, at the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Wacipi grounds. Today, the original Sisseton Agency is wholly gone.

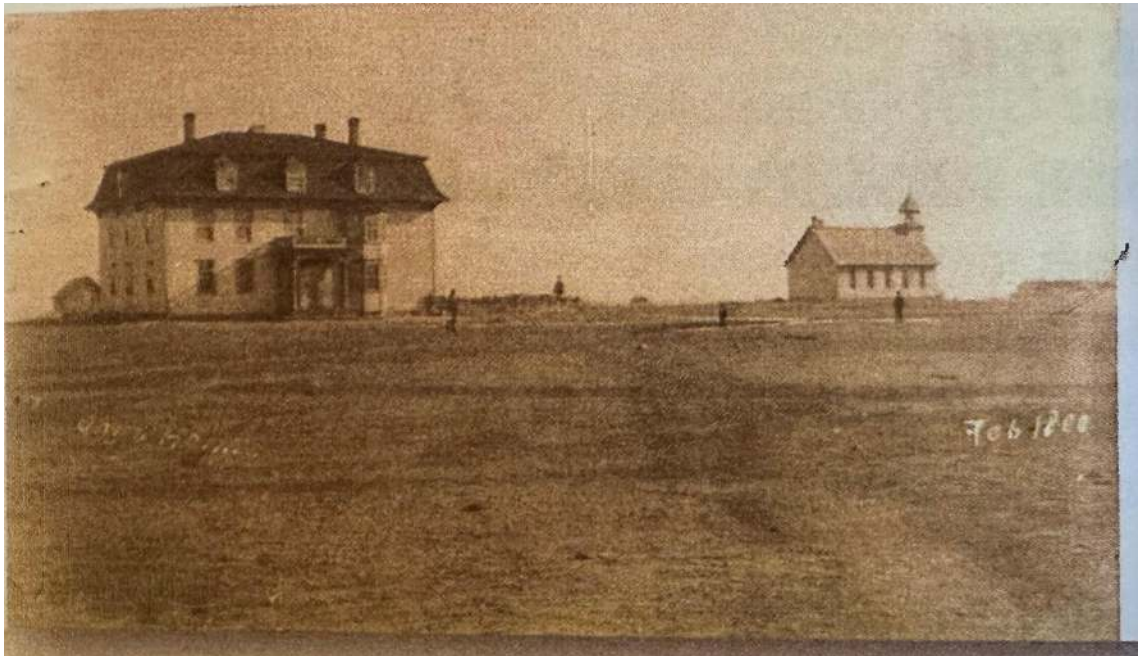
The oral and documented history begins with the Early "Indian" Education of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota of the Lake Traverse Reservation operated by

religious missions. The very first on the reservation were the Presbyterians. Two (2) schools were built on the Lake Traverse Reservation in 1870. One being a brick building using bricks from Morris, Minnesota, built near Gabrielle Renville's cemetery. The debate by oral history says it was never used as a school but was a place of residence, once being a home for Felix Renville. The other documented school was built in 1870 by the Presbyterian missionary Reverend Stephen R. Riggs, who also built a church on the Lake Traverse Reservation. The church was called Goodwill Church, and the school was named the Goodwill Mission School or Tipi Sa, as the Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota called it. The Goodwill Church and Mission School or Tipi Sa were located two (2) miles north of the original Sisseton Agency (current wacipi grounds). Goodwill Mission School, or Tipi Sa, expanded to eventually have ten (10) buildings that included both boys' and girls dormitories. Dakota oral history states that every fall, after harvest, a wagon would come around and pick up the Dakota children so they could attend school. The children were not brought back until spring. For some children, it was a very lonely time. Some parents hid their children because they would not see them for a long time if they went away to school. According to Dan Rinas in the book, "Across the Years, History of Sisseton, South Dakota, 1892-1992," the Goodwill Mission School or Tipi Sa closed sometime after 1905.



In 1873, the United States government built another school, called Tipi Zi, for both Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota boys and girls. Tipi Zi was located between Goodwill Mission School or Tipi Sa and Sisseton Agency (wacipi grounds). There

is minimal written history, oral history, or documentation regarding Tipi Zi. However, according to Dan Rinas in the book, "Across the Years, History of Sisseton, South Dakota, 1892-1992," Tipi Zi closed in 1919 and may have been destroyed in the early 1930s when the foundation was blown up. According to A.M. Anderson in the book, "Across the Years, History of Sisseton, South Dakota, 1892-1992", under Agency Township Schools, the Government School or Tipi Zi and Goodwill Mission School or Tipi Sa were abandoned buildings to be sold and moved off in 1920 through 1925.



Tipi Zi

In 1893, St. Andrew's Day School was built one (1) mile south of Sisseton by an Ursuline Sister. It was not on the Lake Traverse Reservation. This school was unsuccessful and abandoned in 1910 when the government no longer supported mission schools.

In 1938, the Catholic Tekakwitha Orphanage began due to the extreme poverty of the Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota. Father Pohlen operated the orphanage, which was a boarding home for Native American children. On August 25, 1938, another orphanage building was added and named St. Peter's School.



In 1941, Sister Irene DeMarrias, an enrolled member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe, returned home to the Lake Traverse Reservation to teach at St. Peter's School. Another country school was moved to Tekakwitha Orphanage, where Sister Irene DeMarrias taught the first and second graders. Sister Irene DeMarrias was a teacher for many years at the Tekakwitha Orphanage. In 1966, the Tekakwitha Catholic School closed after the orphanage decided to integrate the children into the Sisseton Public School. The Tekakwitha Orphanage continued its operation as a boarding home for Native American children until its closing in May 1986.



Sister Irene - Photo Courtesy of Crystal Owen

### **LAKE TRAVERSE RESERVATION DAY SCHOOLS**

Day Schools on the Lake Traverse Reservation began so Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota families could send their children to schools near their homes. The children attended school during the day and returned home to their families at the end of the day instead of living in a boarding school away from their families for an extended period. Children who attended boarding school would leave their families in the fall and return home in the spring. These Day Schools were built by the United States government ("Government").

In 1938, the government built two (2) Day Schools on the Lake Traverse Reservation. They were the Old Agency Day School and Long Hollow Day School.



Old Agency Day School Students

Old Agency Day School was ahead of its time as it had a wind tower or wind charger, as seen in photos of the school. The wind tower was about 50 feet high and stored the energy from the wind in batteries, providing running water and electricity to the school. Many people passing on oral history stated the school was for grades K-8. No precise date or documentation is showing when the school closed. A square metal sign in the Sisseton-Wahpeton Archives states that the United States Department of Interior built the Old Agency Day School, the only memento of its origin. The location of the Old Agency Day School was in Agency Village, where the current Lake Traverse Utilities Commission (LTUC) and Community Center now sit.

Long Hollow Day School was built in 1938 for grades K-8. The school was in operation for 25-30 years. After it was closed, the Long Hollow District used the building. There is no documentation when Long Hollow Day School officially closed its doors. The location of Long Hollow Day School was in the current Long Hollow Housing area. The Long Hollow Day School was a Native American school that allowed integration with non-native youth to attend, according to A.M. Anderson in the book *Across The Years, History of Sisseton, South Dakota, 1892—1992*.

In 1942, the third Day School was built. Big Coulee Day School was built by the government ahead of its time, with a wind tower or wind charger, as documented in the Sisseton Agency Building Binder, which is cared for at the Tribal Historic Preservation Office and Archives. The wind tower stored the energy created from the wind in batteries, providing running water and electricity to the school. No documentation was found that states when Big Coulee Day School closed. The location of the Big Coulee Day School was a few miles east of the current Big Coulee housing area or Big Coulee Flats.



Enemy Swim Day School



Enemy Swim Day School Students



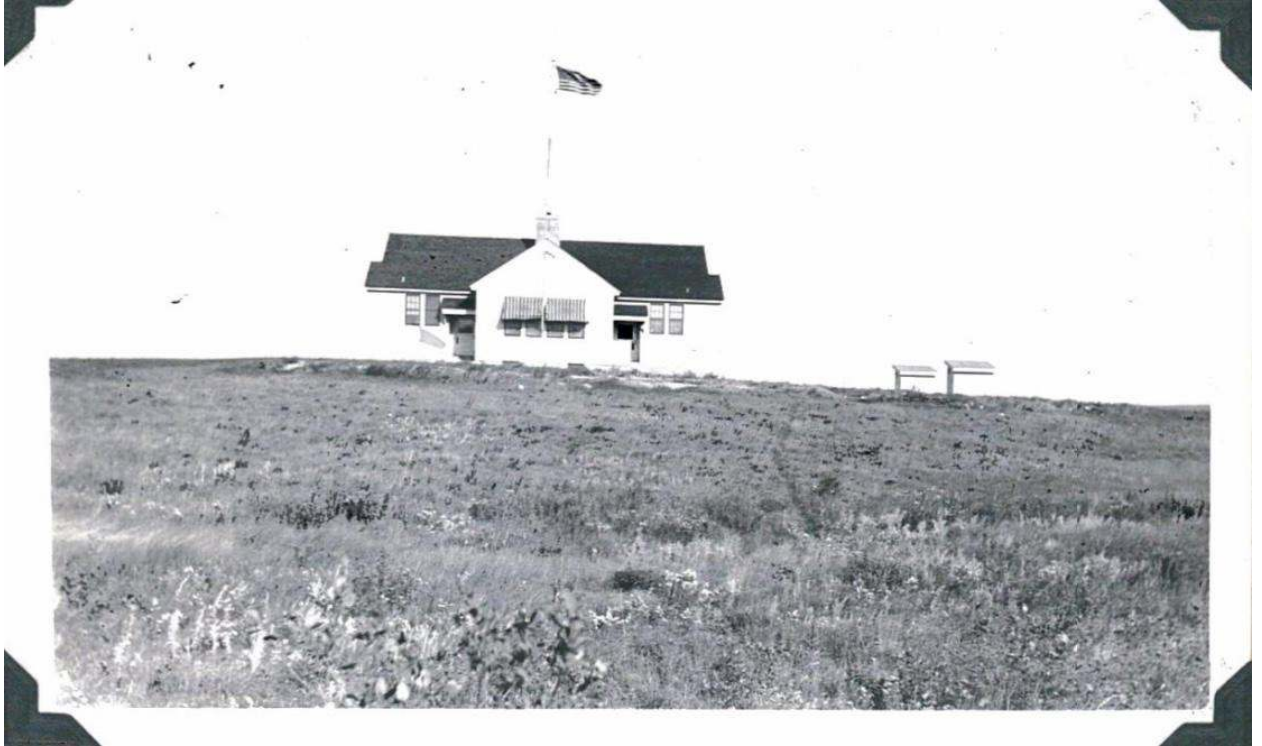
Enemy Swim Day School, Sewing Club

In 1941, the government built a Day School at Enemy Swim. Enemy Swim Day School was initially built in a field with no wind charger, but it had a pump house for water. This is documented in the Sisseton Agency Building Binder, which is cared for at the Tribal Historic Preservation Office and Archives. Enemy Swim Day School is one of a handful of Day Schools left in the Nation and continues to offer high-quality education.



Enemy Swim Day School

In 1943, the fourth and last of the Day Schools was built. The Big Coulee Day School was built by the government. The Day School was ahead of its time with a wind tower or wind charger, as documented in the Sisseton Agency Building Binder, that is cared for at the Tribal Historic Preservation Office and Archives. The wind tower stored the energy from the wind in batteries, providing running water and electricity to the school. No documentation was found that states when Big Coulee Day School was closed. The location of the Big Coulee Day School was a few miles east of the current Big Coulee housing area or Big Coulee Flats.



Big Coulee Day School, 1941



Big Coulee Day School students, 1939

Legislative Bill 847 voted to close Indian Day Schools, except for Enemy Swim Day School, which continues to operate. After the Day Schools closed, children attended the Sisseton, Waubay, and Wilmot public schools.

Goodwill Mission

### **ENEMY SWIM DAY SCHOOL (ESDS)**

#### **Mission Statement:**

Toka Nuwan Wayawa Tipi, an indigenous school of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate, honors those who have come before by providing a safe environment, immersing cultural teachings, and by inspiring learners to develop a foundation of critical thinking and social-emotional skills to be good relatives.

The Enemy Swim Day School (ESDS) was established in 1943, and the building where they were housed was built by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It is one of a handful of day schools left in the nation. A transition from a 638 Grant School to a PL 100-297 Contract School occurred in 1983. The school also receives Title VII (Impact Aid) funding.

In the 1960s and 70s, Enemy Swim Day School provided education services in cooperation with the Waubay Public School. It is chartered by the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate and governed by an elected school board. The ESDS serves pre-K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students from Enemy Swim and all the districts of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate and the general public, providing general and special education programs. In December 2005, under the direction of Dr. Sherry Johnson, ESDS moved to its present location north of the Buffalo Farm and south of the Enemy Swim Housing site. The school opened its FACE (Family and Child Education) site in 2000 and has operated a full-service child care center since 2007.



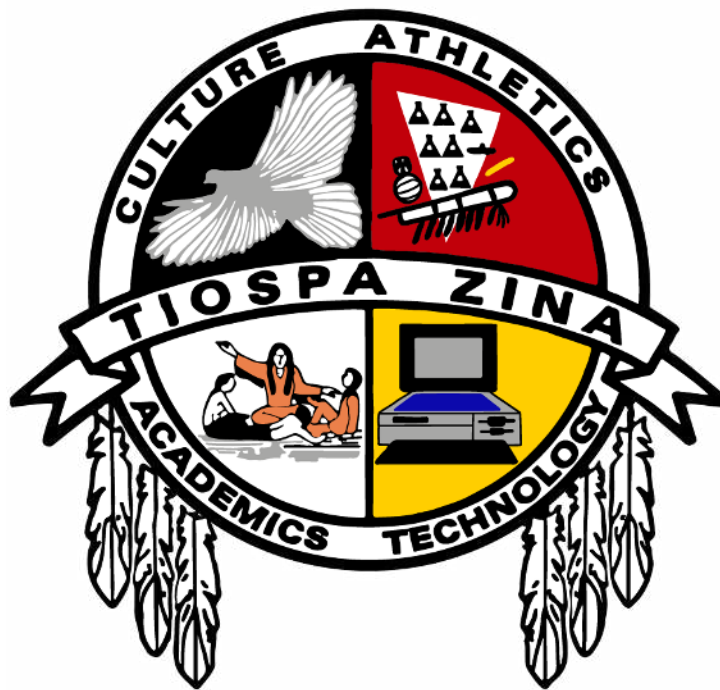
Goodwill Mission

The "Day" in the name of the school reflects a change in US Indian Education policy from boarding schools to educating Indian children in their communities. Toka Nuwan Wayawapi is the school's Dakota name, which means Enemy Swim-place where we learn. Enemy Swim is a story derived from a local battle between the Dakota and rivals where Dakota Akicitapi forced their attackers to swim to the safety of an island in Enemy Swim Lake. The Enemy Swim Day School continues to offer high-quality education to the children in the Glacial Lake region.

### **TIOSPA ZINA TRIBAL SCHOOL (TZTS)**

#### **Mission Statement:**

The mission of Tiospa Zina Tribal School, as a Dakota School created from the vision of a few and supported by many, is to cultivate successful citizens by building positive relationships with families in our culturally diverse society with Wicake - honesty, Tehinda - guidance, Waunsida - compassion, Okciya - generosity, Ohoda - respect, Woksape - understanding.



On March 7, 1978, the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribal Council passed Tribal Council Resolution 78-42, which resolved that "the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) has failed to live up to the responsibility for occupancy and use of federal equipment...." and "that the BIA be admonished for not fulfilling its trust responsibility or congressionally delegated responsibility for federal property."

The Tribal Council also passed Tribal Council Resolution 78-43, which resolved "that the BIA begin immediate negotiation with the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe for

transfer of the two buildings (Sisseton High School and Peever School) and equipment to tribal control."

On January 28, 1981, a group of concerned parents presented statements of problems to the Sisseton Public School Board. The consensus was that the treatment of Indian students was a long-standing problem but was beginning to be intolerable. This same group of parents met with the school board on February 3, 1981, and announced to the board that they were withdrawing their children from the Sisseton Public School and would be starting their school. On March 16, 1981, a small group of parents and students began holding classes in the north room of the tribal gym.

A letter dated May 18, 1981, signed by Pat Gill, Chairperson of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Tribal School Board, was sent to Dr. Earl Barlow, Director of Office of Indian Education Programs, "requesting consideration for eventual funding as a new start school and International Society for Education Planning (ISEP) funding from the BIA. Dr. Barlow responded by letter, dated July 8, 1981, in which he stated, "the Office of Indian Education Programs (OIEP) fully supports tribal goals of operating their school" and "it appears that your application would fall under moratorium."



Tiospa Zina Tribal School

On January 12, 1982, Chief Tribal Judge Lorraine Rousseau acknowledged, in letter form, the competency of the Tribal School. Despite the competency letter, the Sisseton Public Schools filed truancy charges against the parents who had children attending the tribal school.

The School started the 1982-1983 school year without a BIA contract. In the fall of this same school year, the school received an IRS 501(c)3 tax-exempt status and moved into a house in Rehab Village. Tiospa Zina Tribal School started the 1983-1984 school year in the outpatient complex at Rehab Village using only Title IV Indian Education Act-Establishment Grant funds.

On January 31, 1984, Tiospa Zina Tribal School received a Certificate of Accreditation from the State Board of Education for the 1983-1984 school year. This accreditation allowed the school to participate in the National School Lunch Program. The school year ended with 27 students enrolled.



Tiospa Zina Students building sweat lodge

Tiospa Zina Tribal School started its 1984-1985 school year in a facility funded and built by the Tribe. Its ending enrollment for this school year was 130 students. Tribal Resolution 84-90, dated October 2, 1984, resolved "that the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe reaffirms and renews its support of Tiospa Zina Tribal School in its efforts to establish itself as a contract school." On July 1, 1985, the Tiospa Zina School Board filed a complaint in the US District Court, South Dakota, Northern Division, against Donald Hodel, Secretary of Interior. The complaint alleged that the refusal to allow the school to become a contract school "has been illegal and contrary to provisions of 25 US Code 450 and US Code 2001-2019, failure to provide a hearing constituted denial of Plaintiff's right to due process" and "denied Plaintiff equal protection of the law." It further alleged the Dept. of Interior failed to carry out its duty when it placed the school on a moratorium, which Plaintiffs contend is "contrary to Congressional Budget and Impoundment Act of 1974. Damages were requested for \$4,625,000 plus interest and attorney fees. US Attorney, John Ulrich responded, "the Plaintiff has failed to exhaust administrative remedies, and the Court lacks jurisdiction in this matter."

In the report to the HR 2908, Indian Education Technical Amendment Act of 1985, it states, "the Committee feels this is warranted because at least one of the applicants, the Tiospa Zina School on the Sisseton-Wahpeton Reservation is a viable, State accreditation and funding program which stands in jeopardy due to the Bureau's failure to meet its review timeline." Mr. Kildee of Michigan

sponsored the House Resolution. Senator Tom Daschle of South Dakota and Senator Dorgan of North Dakota supported this resolution.

Tiospa Zina Tribal School began its 1986-87 school year, and within a few months, it had negotiated and signed a PL 93-638 contract. The negotiations included an agreement to drop the pending lawsuit in exchange for startup funding. The school expanded its facility and added grades 9-12, increasing enrollment from 130 to 20 students. The school also receives Title VII (Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education) funding.

In 1987, Tiospa Zina Tribal School held its first graduation, with six (6) seniors graduating. They were Justin Bagola, Darren Gill, Dennis Hopkins, Sr., Carl Lufkins, Jr., Travis Max, Sr., Danny Seaboy and Tom Wilson.

A new facility to house the ever-growing student population became a reality when the Tribe received funding from the floating of bonds process. Tiospa Zina Tribal School began the school year 1999-2000 in the new school building.

The school has continued to grow under the leadership of Dr. Roger Bordeaux, who was a driving force behind the curriculum development process. He was a visionary leader who not only believed that curriculum was at the center of the school but also practiced this belief. He served as the school's superintendent for a significant period.

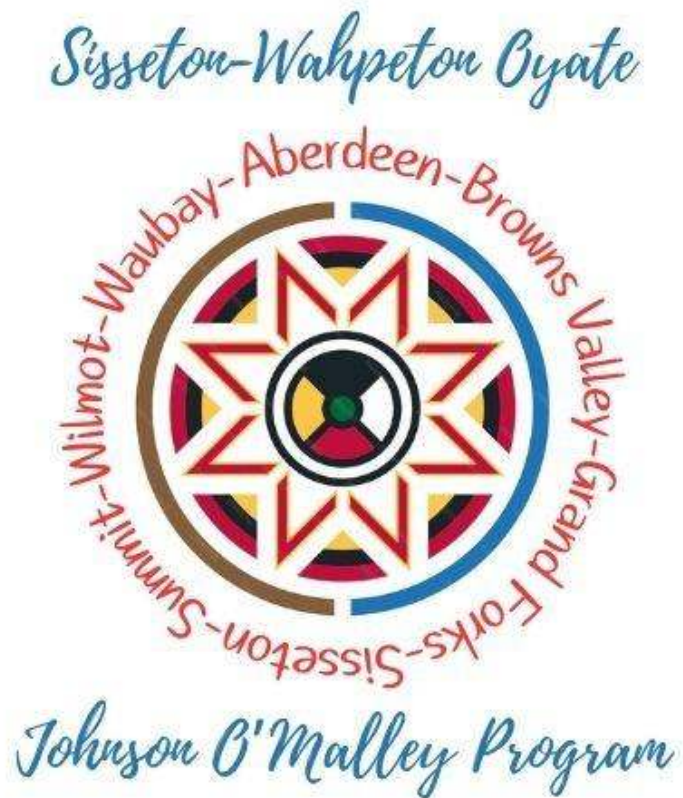
### **SISSETON-WAHPETON OYATE JOHNSON O'MALLEY (JOM)**

The purpose of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Johnson O'Malley (SWO JOM) program is to meet the specialized and unique educational needs of eligible Native American students within Browns Valley, Sisseton, Waubay and Wilmot Public School systems. The SWO JOM program provides learning experiences for eligible Native American students by implementing educational programs to promote academic success through improved self-esteem and the development of the student's native culture and language.



JOM Cultural Program Participants

Enacted in 1934, the Johnson O'Malley (JOM) program was the first attempt by the federal government to fund programs for educating Native American students (and other social programs) on an institutional basis. Beginning then and continuing through the 1960s, the JOM program authorized and funded the basic costs associated with academic programs and additional supplemental programs for Native American students in public schools. This program made available a range of educational/remedial services, cultural programs, and services that provided basic needs (eyeglasses, clothing, etc.). Under changes in the regulations in the 1970s, such programs became contractable by Native American Tribes and nations, and today, all of the funds are contracted through Tribes or tribal organizations.



The JOM program, by regulations, allows for the full participation of parents in the design and implementation of their JOM program to meet the needs of their children best. To build a supportive educational program, periodic Needs Assessments gather information about the specialized and unique educational needs of the eligible Native American students. Parent and community responses provide essential direction for developing the programs to meet the specific needs. The results of the surveys are used to create the goals and objectives for review and official approval of the SWO JOM Committee. The three goals are:

Goal 1: Awareness of the SWO JOM program. To make the community aware of the SWO JOM program through parent letters, email, newspaper, and radio.

Goal 2: Assist students in their academic endeavors by acknowledging encounters that surface in all grades (pre-school-12<sup>th</sup>). JOM assists eligible students with afterschool programs, tutoring, transportation, parental fees and reimbursement for special needs of students.

Goal 3: Develop and enrich SWO JOM students with their Dakota culture and language. Several education research studies have established a connection between positive self-esteem and quality academic performance by students. Indian community cultural activities contribute to the positive interactions between tribal elders and the student learners. A Native American child with a positive attitude and involvement with ongoing cultural activities will likely enhance scholastic performance.

The SWO Johnson O'Malley Committee is an advisory board consisting of parents whose children tend to be in one of the four (4) school districts which the SWO JOM provides services. The four (4) school districts are:

1. Browns Valley School District

Mission Statement:

Working in partnership with family and community to create a safe environment and to educate responsible, lifelong learners.

Browns Valley Public School is a K-8 school located on the Minnesota side of the reservation. The Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate works with the School through the JOM program. Browns Valley is a Title I school that is 56% Native American. It teaches the Dakota Language to both Native American and non-Native students. High school students generally attend Sisseton High School (Sisseton, SD), approximately 12 miles west of Browns Valley, MN.

Browns Valley School was established in 1881 as an elementary school. In 1896, a high school building was added, making Browns Valley School a K-12<sup>th</sup> grade school. In 1900, the first graduation was held. The last graduating class was in 1994. In 1985, Browns Valley School and Beardsley School contracted for grades 9-12 to attend school at Browns Valley. The elementary students stayed at Beardsley School. In 1994, the Beardsley School contracted with Clinton-Graceville School. In 1993, Browns Valley Public School 54-1 contracted with Sisseton Public School 54-8 for their High School students to attend Sisseton Public School. In 1994, Browns Valley and Sisseton Public Schools reorganized into Sisseton Public School 54-9.

2. Sisseton School District

Mission Statement:

The mission of Sisseton School District 54-2 is to involve educators, parents, community members, and students to ensure that students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to become responsible citizens, develop the desire to become lifelong learners, acquire essential skills needed for employment in a technologically changing world; perpetuate and improve the democratic process; and establish cultural literacy to utilize reading, writing, and speaking skills to enlarge their understanding of the nation and world.

The Sisseton Public School District is a K-12 school located in the town of Sisseton and is a Title I school that is 62% Native American. The school also receives Impact Aid and Title VII funding, the funding amounts of which are never disclosed to the public. Sisseton Public School has a history of school district reorganizations and has reorganized with three (3) other school districts:

- 1990 – Sisseton 54-5 and New Effington 54-3 reorganized into Sisseton Public 54-8.
- 1993 – Browns Valley 54-1 contracted with Sisseton Public 54-8.
- 1994 – Browns Valley and Sisseton Public reorganized into Sisseton 54-9.
- 2004 – Sisseton 54-9 and Veblen 45-3 reorganized into Sisseton 54-2.

### 3. Waubay School District

#### Mission Statement:

The Waubay School Board and staff believe that education is a continuous learning process and a lifelong endeavor to develop each student's needs and physical, social, athletic, and emotional potential. They will strive to provide stimulation and assistance so that each student develops abilities, interests, and potential into wholesome, decision-making, happy young citizens and competent and productive human beings in our society.

The Waubay Public School District is a K-12 school located in Waubay and is a Title I school that is 52% Native American. The school also receives Impact Aid and Title VII funding.

### 4. Wilmot School District

#### Vision Statement:

The Wilmot School wants to help students contribute positively to society through leadership, self-confidence, integrity, citizenship, good work ethic, and accountability. Our school district is a strong academic institution that strives to help our students succeed in a multi-cultural, technologically literate, and ever-changing society with the support and involvement of our staff, parents, and community.

The Wilmot Public School District is a K-12 school located in the town of Wilmot and is a Title I school that is 23% Native American.

The state of education in tribal communities evolves rapidly. Before forced settlement on the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Lake Traverse Reservation, education for Dakota people was based on oral histories and storytelling in the winter months. Today, the state of education in tribal communities is based on standards from the Departments of Education at the State, Bureau of Indian Education, Federal, and, more importantly, the Tribal level. To exercise Tribal sovereignty, the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Tribal Education Department has been dedicated to creating and implementing Indigenized approaches to supporting and educating students on and surrounding the Lake Traverse Reservation.

The Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Tribal Education Department oversees educational operations on the Lake Traverse Reservation. It offers various programs, such as the Johnson O'Malley program, which supports eligible Native American students in dropout prevention, Native American languages, culture, and other academic areas. The SWO Tribal Education Department offers assistance after K-12 through its higher education office. This office provides financial aid to SWO Tribal members and grade incentives, furthering the push to encourage tribal members to pursue higher education.

Early childhood education is well established on the Sisseton-Wahpeton Reservation with the HeadStart and Early HeadStart programs offering educational opportunities for Native American children under the age of 5. Both the HeadStart and Early HeadStart programs are operated by the tribe and are funded by the National HeadStart Foundation. The curriculum includes Dakota language lessons as well as pre-kindergarten curriculum to ensure students are at level and ready to enter any school setting when they graduate from HeadStart.

The Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate charts three schools: Tiospa Zina Tribal School that serves students from Kindergarten through twelve grade, Enemy Swim Day School serving Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade, and an off reservation boarding school Circle of Nations that serves fourth grade to eighth grade. Each school offers educational opportunities for students on the Lake Traverse Reservation and beyond. One main concern for the schools located on or near the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate is the teacher shortage that is felt nationwide. Due to this shortage, schools have been supplementing their staffing with teachers worldwide. As a result, the International teachers population in tribal schools has drastically increased.



Circle of Nations School

Sisseton-Wahpeton College (SWC) is located here to offer an array of Associate degrees, certification programs, and two Bachelor of Science degrees. SWC is part of the Northern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (NIAC). Sports available for students include men's and women's basketball and women's volleyball.



Sisseton Wahpeton College

## Gaming

The Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate owns and operates three casinos: Dakota Magic Casino, Dakota Sioux Casino, and Dakota Connection Casino. These casinos are located along Interstate I-29 in northeastern South Dakota and southeastern North Dakota. Dakota Magic Casino and Hotel also includes a 9-hole golf course, which is open only during the summer. The casinos generate valuable gaming revenue, which provides additional support for tribal members. Collectively, they are known as the Dakota Nations Gaming Enterprise. These casinos have various forms of betting, including slot machines, table games, and newly added sports betting - which has become very popular in recent years.



Dakota Magic Casino and Hotel



Dakota Sioux Casino

## IHS/Woodrow Wilson Keeble Story



The Sisseton Indian Health Service (IHS) is located just outside Sisseton and offers healthcare services to enrolled tribal members, such as dentistry, primary care, and behavioral health. The Sisseton IHS has a unique name. Instead of being called IHS, it was officially renamed the Woodrow Wilson Keeble Memorial Healthcare Center in honor of Master Sergeant Woodrow Wilson Keeble. Master Sgt. Keeble was a SWO-enrolled tribal member who served in both World War II and the Korean War. Master Stg. Keeble's memorial is held in high regard due to his bravery on the battlefield. He was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 2008.

*"Master Sergeant Woodrow W. Keeble distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action with an armed enemy near Sangsan-ni, Korea, on October 20, 1951. On that day, Master Sergeant Keeble was an acting platoon leader for the support platoon in Company G, 19th Infantry, in the attack on Hill 765, a steep and rugged position that was well defended by the enemy. Leading the support platoon, Master Sergeant Keeble saw that the attacking elements had become pinned down on the slope by heavy enemy fire from three well-fortified and strategically placed enemy positions.*

*With complete disregard for his personal safety, Master Sergeant Keeble dashed forward and joined the pinned-down platoon. Then, hugging the ground, Master Sergeant Keeble crawled forward alone until he was in close proximity to one of the hostile machine-gun emplacements. Ignoring the heavy fire that the crew trained on him, Master Sergeant Keeble activated a grenade and threw it with great accuracy, successfully destroying the position. Continuing his one-man*

*assault, he moved to the second enemy position and destroyed it with another grenade. Despite the fact that the enemy troops were now directing their firepower against him and unleashing a shower of grenades in a frantic attempt to stop his advance, he moved forward against the third hostile emplacement, and skillfully neutralized the remaining enemy position.*

*As his comrades moved forward to join him, Master Sergeant Keeble continued to direct accurate fire against nearby trenches, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. Inspired by his courage, Company G successfully moved forward and seized its important objective. The extraordinary courage, selfless service, and devotion to duty displayed that day by Master Sergeant Keeble was an inspiration to all around him and reflected great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.”*



Master Sergeant Woodrow Wilson Keeble

## Governance

The Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate is divided into seven political and geographic districts, each with an elected representative referred to as a Council Person. The Council is responsible for the legislative actions on behalf of the tribe.



SWO Tribal Council Chambers

They meet regularly with the Tribal Executives monthly in Council meetings to fulfill their duties. The seven districts are as follows:

1. Iyakapta - Trail Head - Natural game trail the people followed to get over the hills (Big Coulee)
2. Can Onasa Bde - Buffalo in the Trees Lake - The buffalo were chased into the lake during hunts, where they fell in the thin ice (Buffalo Lake)
3. Toka Nuwan - Swim Enemy - Due to the battle between the Chippewa and the Dakota, this was called out over and over as the Chippewa swam away (Enemy Swim)

4. Bde Hda Kinyan - A long the lake - The district was named after the lake at which it resides (Lake Traverse)
5. Kaksiza Hanksa - Longest Hollow - Named due to the hollows that stretch as far as Sica Hollow and is the longest hollow in the area (Long Hollow)
6. Ateyapi Tipi - Home of the BIA Superintendent - the district is located near the original site of the Sisseton Agency (Old Agency)
7. Heipa - Mountain Head - Where the range of hills starts and spans out over 300 miles into Minnesota (Veblen)

The Tribal Executives include the Chairperson, the Secretary, and the Vice-Chairperson. They make up the executive branch of the SWO Tribal Government. Each of the executive positions oversees various programs that run the tribe. From social programs such as Child Protection, Education, and the Veterans Memorial Youth Center to managing the budget office and programs such as the Dakota Language Institute, each executive is responsible for their respective programs and well-being in the tribe.

### Social Debates

As with any community, social debates result in a division of opinions among the community members. From blood quantum to language revitalization efforts to drug abuse and overdoses, there are social concerns that plague every community.

The debate on blood quantum is ever-evolving and growing. Blood quantum is the act of determining a person's degree of Indian Blood based on the percentage of their ancestry that comes from a specific tribe, band, or nation. Because blood quantum is a widely known termination effort imposed by the United States government and limited resources are available to help tribal members, people are split on the idea of lowering the mandatory 25% blood quantum rule.

Indigenous languages that flourished in the Americas before European contact are now considered endangered, making language revitalization efforts even more important for communities such as Sisseton-Wahpeton. With programs such as the Dakota Language Institute, Dakotah Iapi Yukini, TZTS and ESDS Dakota Immersion classes, SWC's language learners program, and other community efforts, the Dakota language is slowly becoming more visible.

Alcoholism and drug abuse are of concerns of the tribe and tribal officials. To combat this, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate has various programs to aid in mental health programs, such as Mayuteca, Behavioral Health, a new corrections facility, Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation, and other rehabilitation centers. This increase in access to mental health programs is part of the push to uncover underlying issues surrounding addictions for tribal members. The Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Tribal Police Department

also partners with local and state law enforcement agencies to stop illegal drug trafficking.

### Economy:

Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate does not solely rely on the Dakota Nations Gaming Enterprise to fund the tribe—other economic venues, such as the Dakota Western Corporation and Sisseton-Wahpeton Plastics. DWC and SWO Plastics operate as separate corporations with one team to manage them. Dakota Western manufactures the film and sheeting roll stock, while SWO Plastics converts these materials into trash can liners. SWO also owns and operates convenience stores around the reservation, located near the casinos or the Tribal Administration Building.

Although these businesses create much-needed jobs, the poverty rate on the Lake Traverse Reservation is still relatively high. Over 90% of students between two schools on the Reservation qualify for free or reduced-price meals. However, the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate is still in the top 20 for employment of people in South Dakota.

Fuel Inc. was created in the early 2000s. They are a for-profit entity of the tribe and bring in revenue, or income for the tribe. They provide propane and service repair and partner with the Sisseton Wahpeton Housing Authority to supply the tribal housing areas with propane.

### Conclusion

The Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate today have established themselves as a top contributor to the economic growth in South Dakota by offering various jobs for both tribal members and non-Native people in their community. Their Tribal Education Department is one of the first to oversee, develop, and implement Tribal Education Standards for their schools as well as offer public schools in surrounding communities Professional Development opportunities at no cost to ensure Native American students attending these schools are understood and recognized. Their status as a Federally Recognized Tribe (or a Tribe that holds government to government relations with the United States), allows the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate the ability to run their programs on their own.

### Comprehension Questions

- 1) When was the Lake Traverse Reservation established?
  - a) 1867
- 2) What was another name for the GoodWill Mission School?
  - a) Tipi Sa
- 3) What was the purpose of Day Schools?
  - a) So that Sisseton-Wahpeton families could send their children to schools close to home
- 4) What does the 'Day' in Enemy Swim Day School reflect?
  - a) It reflects the change in the US Indian education policy from boarding schools to educating children in their communities
- 5) What was the reason for the start of Tiospa Zina Tribal School?
  - a) The treatment of Indian students in public schools
- 6) Who is Sisseton's IHS (Indian Health Service) named after?
  - a) Master Sergeant Woodrow Wilson Keeble.
- 7) Why was Master Sergeant Keeble awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor?
- 8) How many districts are within the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate?
  - a) Seven
- 9) What are the three executive positions that make up the executive branch of SWO tribal government?
  - a) The Chairperson, the Secretary, and the Vice-Chairperson.
- 10) What is blood quantum?
  - a) Blood quantum is the act of determining a person's degree of Indian Blood based on the percentage of their ancestry that comes from a specific tribe, band, or nation
- 11) In what ways does the Sisseton Wahpeton Tribe financially support themselves?
  - a) Through gaming enterprises and economic venues such as corporations and business throughout the tribe

## Supplemental Resources

Dakota War  [The U.S. - Dakota War of 1862: A Brief Summary](#)

'The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux (1851) between the Sisseton and Wahpeton bands of Dakota and the US government transferred ownership of much of southeastern Minnesota Territory to the United States. Along with the Treaty of Mendota, signed that same year, it opened twenty-four million acres of land to settler-colonists. For the Dakota, these treaties marked another step in a process that increasingly marginalized them and dismissed them from the land that had been—and remains—their home'

<https://www.mnopedia.org/event/treaty-traverse-des-sioux-1851>

<https://www.usdakotawar.org/history/multimedia/treaty-page-1>

'On February 19, 1867, the United States and the Sisseton and Wahpeton bands signed a treaty reserving the following tract of land for these people. It began at Lake Traverse and ran along the treaty line of the 1851 treaty to Lake Kampeska. The northwest boundary extended just across the line into North Dakota to the Airy Mound in Sargent County'

<https://swo-nsn.gov/government/>

<https://treaties.okstate.edu/treaties/agreement-with-the-sisseton-and-wahpeton-bands-of-sioux-indians-1872-1057>

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Chief Two Bears Photo

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## **Ratified Indian Treaty no. 360 (Treaty of 1867)**

Feb. 19, 1867. | 15 Stat., 505. | Ratified April 15, | 1867. | Proclaimed May 2, | 1867.

### *Preamble.*

Whereas it is understood that a portion of the Sissiton and Warpeton bands of Santee Sioux Indians, numbering from twelve hundred to fifteen hundred persons, not only preserved their obligations to the Government of the United States, during and since the outbreak of the Medewakantons and other bands of Sioux in 1862, but freely perilled their lives during that outbreak to rescue the residents on the Sioux reservation, and to obtain possession of white women and children made captives by the hostile bands; and that another portion of said Sissiton and Warpeton bands, numbering from one thousand to twelve hundred persons, who did not participate in the massacre of the whites in 1862, fearing the indiscriminate vengeance of the whites, fled to the great prairies of the Northwest, where they still remain; and

Whereas Congress, in confiscating the Sioux annuities and reservations, made no provision for the support of these, the friendly portion of the Sissiton and Warpeton bands, and it is believed [that] they have been suffered to remain homeless wanderers, frequently subject to intense sufferings from want of subsistence and clothing to protect them from the rigors of a high northern latitude, although at all times prompt in rendering service when called upon to repel hostile raids and to punish depredations committed by hostile Indians upon the persons and property of the whites; and

Whereas the several subdivisions of the friendly Sissitons and Warpeton bands ask, through their representatives, that their adherence to their former obligations of friendship to the Government and people of the United States be recognized, and that provision be made to enable them to return to an agricultural life and be relieved from a dependence upon the chase for a precarious subsistence: Therefore,

### *Contracting parties.*

A treaty has been made and entered into, at Washington City, District of Columbia, this nineteenth day of February, A. D. 1867, by and between Lewis V. Bogy, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and William H. Watson, commissioners, on the part of the United States, and the undersigned chiefs and head-men of the Sissiton and Warpeton bands of Dakota or Sioux Indians, as follows, to wit:

## **ARTICLE 1.**

*Friendly relations.*

The Sissiton and Warpeton bands of Dakota Sioux Indians, represented in council, will continue their friendly relations with the Government and people of the United States, and bind themselves individually and collectively to use their influence to the extent of their ability to prevent other bands of Dakota or other adjacent tribes from making hostile demonstrations against the Government or people of the United States.

## ARTICLE 2.

*Cession of rights to construct wagon roads, railroads, mail stations, and telegraph lines.*

*Boundaries.*

The said bands hereby cede to the United States the right to construct wagon-roads, railroads, mail stations, telegraph lines, and such other public improvements as the interest of the Government may require, over and across the lands claimed by said bands, (including their reservation as hereinafter designated) over any route or routes that *that* may be selected by the authority of the Government, said lands so claimed being bounded on the south and east by the treaty-line of 1851, and the Red River of the North to the mouth of Goose River; on the north by the Goose River and a line running from the source thereof by the most westerly point of Devil's Lake to the Chief's Bluff at the head of James River, and on the west by the James River to the mouth of Mocasine River, and thence to Kampeska Lake.

## ARTICLE 3.

*Permanent reservation set apart.*

For and in consideration of the cession above mentioned, and in consideration of the faithful and important services said to have been rendered by the friendly bands of Sissitons and Warpetons Sioux here represented, and also in consideration of the confiscation of all their annuities, reservations, and improvements, it is agreed that there shall be set apart for the members of said bands who have heretofore surrendered to the authorities of the Government, and were not sent to the Crow Creek reservation, and for the members of said bands who were released from prison in 1866, the following-described lands as a permanent reservation, viz:

*Boundaries.*

Beginning at the head of Lake Travers[e], and thence along the treaty-line of the treaty of 1851 to Kampeska Lake; thence in a direct line to Reipan or the northeast point of the Coteau des Prairie[s], and thence passing north of Skunk Lake, on the most direct line to the foot of Lake Traverse, and thence along the treaty-line of 1851 to the place of beginning.

## ARTICLE 4.

*Reservation.*

*Boundaries.*

It is further agreed that a reservation be set apart for all other members of said bands who were not sent to the Crow Creek reservation, and also for the Cut-Head bands of Yanktonais Sioux, a reservation bounded as follows, viz:

Beginning at the most easterly point of Devil's Lake; thence along the waters of said lake to the most westerly point of the same; thence on a direct line to the nearest point on the Cheyenne River; thence down said river to a point opposite the lower end of Aspen Island, and thence on a direct line to the place of beginning.

## ARTICLE 5.

*Reservations to be apportioned in tracts of 160 acres, to etc.*

*Tracts to conform to legal subdivisions.*

*Patents: when to issue: effect of.*

The said reservations shall be apportioned in tracts of (160) one hundred and sixty acres to each head of a family or single person over the age of (21) twenty-one years, belonging to said bands and entitled to locate thereon, who may desire to locate permanently and cultivate the soil as a means of subsistence: each (160) one hundred and sixty acres so allotted to be made to conform to the legal subdivisions of the Government surveys when such surveys shall have been made; and every person to whom lands may be allotted under the provisions of this article, who shall occupy and cultivate a portion thereof for five consecutive years shall thereafter be entitled to receive a patent for the same so soon as he shall have fifty acres of said tract fenced, ploughed, and in crop: *Provided*, [That] said patent shall not authorize any transfer of said lands, or portions thereof, except to the United States, but said lands and the

improvements thereon shall descend to the proper heirs of the persons obtaining a patent.

## ARTICLE 6.

*Congress will make appropriations to enable Indians to return to an agricultural life, etc.*

And, further, in consideration of the destitution of said bands of Sissiton and Warpeton Sioux, parties hereto, resulting from the confiscation of their annuities and improvements, it is agreed that Congress will, in its own discretion, from time to time make such appropriations as may be deemed requisite to enable said Indians to return to an agricultural life under the system in operation on the Sioux reservation in 1862; including, if thought advisable, the establishment and support of local and manual-labor schools; the employment of agricultural, mechanical, and other teachers; the opening and improvement of individual farms; and generally such objects as Congress in its wisdom shall deem necessary to promote the agricultural improvement and civilization of said bands.

## ARTICLE 7.

*Agents.*

An agent shall be appointed for said bands, who shall be located at Lake Traverse; and whenever there shall be five hundred (500) persons of said bands permanently located upon the Devil's Lake reservation there shall be an agent or other competent person appointed to superintend at that place the agricultural, educational, and mechanical interests of said bands.

## ARTICLE 8.

*Expenditures.*

*Goods. provisions, etc., not to be issued to Indians, etc., unless.*

*Proviso.*

All expenditures under the provisions of this treaty shall be made for the agricultural improvement and civilization of the members of said bands authorized to locate upon

the respective reservations, as hereinbefore specified, in such manner as may be directed by law; but no goods, provisions, groceries, or other articles—except materials for the erection of houses and articles to facilitate the operations of agriculture—shall be issued to Indians or mixed-bloods on either reservation unless it be in payment for labor performed or for produce delivered: *Provided*, That when persons located on either reservation, by reason of age, sickness, or deformity, are unable to labor, the agent may issue clothing and subsistence to such persons from such supplies as may be provided for said bands.

## ARTICLE 9.

*No person to trade for furs and peltries.*

*Members of bands only, except, etc., to locate on lands.*

The withdrawal of the Indians from all dependence upon the chase as a means of subsistence being necessary to the adoption of civilized habits among them, it is desirable that no encouragement be afforded them to continue their hunting operations as means of support, and, therefore, it is agreed that no person will be authorized to trade for furs or peltries within the limits of the land claimed by said bands, as specified in the second article of this treaty, it being contemplated that the Indians will rely solely upon agricultural and mechanical labor for subsistence, and that the agent will supply the Indians and mixed-bloods on the respective reservations with clothing, provisions, &c., as set forth in article eight, so soon as the same shall be provided for that purpose. And it is further agreed that no person not a member of said bands, parties hereto whether white, mixed-blood, or Indian, except persons in the employ of the Government or located under its authority, shall be permitted to locate upon said lands, either for hunting, trapping, or agricultural purposes.

## ARTICLE 10.

*Chiefs and head men may adopt rules.*

The chiefs and head-men located upon either of the reservations set apart for said bands are authorized to adopt such rules, regulations, or laws for the security of life and property, the advancement of civilization, and the agricultural prosperity of the members of said bands upon the respective reservations, and shall have authority, under the direction of the agent, and without expense to the Government, to organize a force sufficient to carry out all such rules, regulations, or laws, and all rules and regulations

for the government of said Indians, as may be prescribed by the Interior Department: *Provided*, That all rules, regulations, or laws adopted or amended by the chiefs and head-men on either reservation shall receive the sanction of the agent.

In testimony whereof, we, the commissioners representing the United States, and the delegates representing the Sissiton and Warpeton bands of Sioux Indians, have hereunto set our hands and seals, at the place and on the day and year above written.

Lewis V. Bogy, Commissioner of Indian Affairs.  
W. H. Watson.

Signed in the presence of—

Charles E. Mix.

Gabriel Renville, head chief Siss(i)ton and Wa(r)peton bands.

Wamdiupiduta, his x mark, head Siss(i)ton chief.

Tacandupahotanka, his x mark, head Wa(r)peton chief.

Oyehduze, his x mark, chief Sissiton.

Umpehtutokca, his x mark, chief Wahpeton.

John Otherday.

Akicitananjin, his x mark, Sissiton soldier.

Waxicunmaza, his x mark, Sissiton soldier.

Wasukiye, his x mark, Sissiton soldier.

Wamdiduta, his x mark, Sissiton soldier.

Hokxidanwaxte, his x mark, Sissiton soldier.

Wakanto, his x mark, Sissiton soldier.

Ecanajinke, his x mark, Sissiton soldier.

Canteiyapa, his x mark, Sissiton soldier.

Tihdonica, his x mark, Sissiton soldier.

Tawapahamaza, his x mark, Sissiton soldier.

Wandiiyeza, his x mark, Sissiton soldier.

Tacunrpijeta, his x mark, Sissiton soldier.

Wicumrpinumpa, his x mark, Wa(r)peton soldier.

Xupehiyu, his x mark, Wa(r)peton soldier.

Ecetukiye, his x mark, Wa(r)peton soldier.

Kangiduta, his x mark, Wa(r)peton soldier.

Witnesses to signatures of above chiefs and soldiers:

Charles E. Mix.

Benj'n Thompson.

J. R. Brown.

Anexus M. A. Brown, Interpreter.

Chas. Crawford.

Thos. E. McGraw.

J. H. Leavenworth.

A. B. Norton.

Geo. B. Jonas.

Frank S. Mix.

## **Treaty of Traverse des Sioux (1851)**

July 23, 1851. | 10 Stats., 949. | Proclamation, Feb. 24. 1853.

*Articles of a treaty made and concluded at Traverse des Sioux, upon the Minnesota River, in the Territory of Minnesota, on the twenty-third day of July, eighteen hundred and fifty-one, between the United States of America, by Luke Lea, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and Alexander Ramsey, governor and ex-officio superintendent of Indian affairs in said Territory, commissioners duly appointed for that purpose, and See-see-toan and Wah-pay-toan bands of Dakota or Sioux Indians.*

### **ARTICLE 1.**

*Peace to exist.*

It is stipulated and solemnly agreed that the peace and friendship now so happily existing between the United States and the aforesaid bands of Indians, shall be perpetual.

### **ARTICLE 2.**

*Cession of lands to the United*

The said See-see-toan and Wah-pay-toan bands of Dakota or Sioux Indians, agree to cede, and do hereby cede, sell, and relinquish to the United States, all their lands in the State of Iowa; and, also all their lands in the Territory of Minnesota, lying east of the following line, to wit: Beginning at the junction of the Buffalo River with the Red River of

the North; thence along the western bank of said Red River of the North, to the mouth of the Sioux Wood River; thence along the western bank of said Sioux Wood River to Lake Traverse; thence, along the western shore of said lake, to the southern extremity thereof; thence in a direct line, to the junction of Kampeska Lake with the Tchan-kas-an-data, or Sioux River; thence along the western bank of said river to its point of intersection with the northern line of the State of Iowa; including all the islands in said rivers and lake.

## ARTICLE 3.

[Stricken out.]

## ARTICLE 4.

### *Payment to said Indians.*

In further and full consideration of said cession, the United States agree to pay to said Indians the sum of one million six hundred and sixty-five thousand dollars (\$1,665,000,) at the several times, in the manner and for the purposes following, to wit:

### *Proviso.*

1st. To the chiefs of the said bands, to enable them to settle their affairs and comply with their present just engagement; and in consideration of their removing themselves to the country set apart for them as above, which they agree to do within two years, or sooner, if required by the President, without further cost or expense to the United

States, and in consideration of their subsisting themselves the first year after their removal, which they agree to do without further cost or expense on the part of the United States, the sum of two hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars, (\$275,000): *Provided*, That said sum shall be paid to the chiefs in such manner as they, hereafter, in open council shall request, and as soon after the removal of said Indians to the home set apart for them, as the necessary appropriation therefor shall be made by Congress.

2d. To be laid out under the direction of the President for the establishment of manual-labor schools; the erection of mills and blacksmith shops, opening farms, fencing and breaking land, and for such other beneficial objects as may be deemed most conducive to the prosperity and happiness of said Indians, thirty thousand dollars, (\$30,000.)

The balance of said sum of one million six hundred and sixty-five thousand dollars, (\$1,665,000,) to wit: one million three hundred and sixty thousand dollars (\$1,360,000) to remain in trust with the United States, and five per cent interest thereon to be paid, annually, to said Indians for the period of fifty years, commencing the first day of July, eighteen hundred and fifty-two (1852,) which shall be in full payment of said balance, principal and interest, the said payment to be applied under the direction of the President, as follows, to wit:

3d. For a general agricultural improvement and civilization fund, the sum of twelve thousand dollars, (\$12,000.)

4th. For educational purposes, the sum of six thousand dollars, (\$6,000.)

5th. For the purchase of goods and provisions, the sum of ten thousand dollars,  
(\$10,000.)

6th. For money annuity, the sum of forty thousand dollars,(\$40,000.)

## ARTICLE 5.

### *Laws respecting liquors to*

The laws of the United States, prohibiting the introduction and sale of spirituous liquors in the Indian country shall be in full force and effect throughout the territory hereby ceded and lying in Minnesota until otherwise directed by Congress or the President of the United States.

## ARTICLE 6.

### *Rules may be prescribed.*

Rules and regulations to protect the rights of persons and property among the Indians, parties to this treaty, and adapted to their condition and wants, may be prescribed and enforced in such manner as the President or the Congress of the United States, from time to time, shall direct.

In testimony whereof, the said Commissioners, Luke Lea and Alexander Ramsey, and the undersigned Chiefs and Headmen of the aforesaid See-see-toan and Wah-pay-toan bands of Dakota or Sioux Indians, have hereunto subscribed their names and affixed

their seals, in duplicate, at Traverse des Sioux, Territory of Minnesota, this twenty-third day of July, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-one.

L. Lea, [SEAL.]

Alex. Ramsey, [SEAL.]

|                                                   |                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Een-yang-ma-nee (Running Walker or<br>"the Gun,") | Hoak-shee-dan-wash-tay, (Good Boy,) |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|

|                                                                   |                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Wee-tchan-h' pee-ee-tay-toan, (the Star<br>face or the "Orphan,") | Ee-tay-tcho-ka, (Face in the midst,) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|

|                                                             |                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Ee-tay-wa-keen-yan, ("Limping Devil" or<br>"Thunder Face,") | Hay-ha-hen-day-ma-za, (Metal Horn,) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|

|                                  |                            |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Eesh-ta-hum-ba, ("Sleepy Eyes,") | Am-pay-too-sha, (Red Day,) |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|

|                                                |                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Oo-pee-ya-hen-day-a, (Extending his<br>train,) | Eesh-ta-humba-koash-ka, (Sleepy Eyes<br>young,) |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|

|                                     |                                               |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Tan-pa-hee-da, (Sounding Moccasin,) | A na-wang-ma-nee, (Who goes galloping<br>on,) |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|

|                           |                                      |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Eenk-pa, (the upper end,) | Ma-h'pee-wee-tchash-ta, (Cloud man,) |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|

|                              |                                  |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Wee-yoa-kee-yay, (Standard,) | Ta-pe-ta-tan-ka, (His Big fire,) |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|

|                                   |                                                  |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Wa-kan-man-nee, (Walking Spirit,) | Ma-h'pee-ya-h'na-shkan-shkan, (Moving<br>Cloud,) |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|

|                                                 |                             |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Ee-tay-sha, (the one that reddens his<br>face,) | Wa-na-pay-a, (The pursuer,) |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|

Ta-ka-ghay, (Elk maker,)

Ee-tcha-shkan-shkan-ma-nee, (Who  
walks shaking,)

Wa-ma-ksoon-tay, ("Walnut," or Blunt  
headed arrow,)

Ta-wa-kan-he-day-ma-za, (His Metal  
Lighthing,)

Ma-za-sh'a, (Metal Sounding,)

Ee-tay doo-ta, (Red Face,)

Ya-shoa-pee, (The wind instrument,)

Henok-marpi-yahdi-nape, (Reappearing  
Cloud,)

Noan-pa keen-yan, (Twice Flying,)

Tchan-hedaysh-ka-ho-toan-ma-nee, (the  
moving sounding Harp)

Wash-tay-da, (Good, a little,)

Ma-zaku-te-ma-ni, (Metal walks  
shooting,)

Wa-keen-yan-ho-ta, (Grey Thunder,)

A-kee-tchee-ta, (Standing Soldier.)

Wa-shee-tchoon-ma-za, (Iron French  
man,)

Signed in presence of Thomas Foster, Secretary. Nathaniel McLean, Indian Agent.

Alexander Faribault, Stephen R. Riggs, Interpreters. A. S. H. White; Thos. S.

Williamson; W. C. Henderson; A. Jackson; James W. Boal; W. G. Le Duc; Alexis Bailly;

H. L. Dousman; Hugh Tyler.

To the Indian names are subjoined marks.

## SUPPLEMENTAL ARTICLE.

*Payment for land ceded.*

1st. The United States do hereby stipulate to pay the Sioux bands of Indians, parties to this treaty, at the rate of ten cents per acre, for the lands included in the reservation provided for in the third article of the treaty as originally agreed upon in the following words:

"ARTICLE 3. In part consideration of the foregoing cession, the United States do hereby set apart for the future occupancy and home of the Dakota Indians, parties to this treaty, to be held by them as Indian lands are held, all that tract of country on either side of the Minnesota River, from the western boundary of the lands herein ceded, east, to the Tchay-tam-bay River on the north, and to Yellow Medicine River on the south side, to extend, on each side, a distance of not less than ten miles from the general course of said river; the boundaries of said tract to be marked out by as straight lines as practicable, whenever deemed expedient by the President, and in such manner as he shall direct:" which article has been stricken out of the treaty by the Senate, the said payment to be in lieu of said reservation: the amount when ascertained under instructions from the Department of the Interior, to be added to the trust-fund provided for in the fourth article.

*Land to be set a part for said Indians.*

*Proviso.*

2d. It is further stipulated, that the President be authorized, with the assent of the said band of Indians, parties to this treaty, and as soon after they shall have given their assent to the foregoing *article*, as may be convenient, to cause to be set apart by appropriate landmarks and boundaries, such tracts of country without the limits of the

cession made by the first [2d] article of the treaty as may be satisfactory for their future occupancy and home: *Provided*, That the President may, by the consent of these Indians, vary the conditions aforesaid if deemed expedient.

