

Sitting Bull



Figura 1: Chief Tatanka-Iyatanka

Sitting Bull was born around 1831 in the South Dakota area; his original birth name was Tatanka-Iyatanka, which was then translated to Sitting Bull by the *Pale Faces*. Sitting Bull's first important battle against the American Army was a striking victory for the Army and left the Sioux badly into pieces, mainly because of the Army's large use of artillery.

As a consequence many Native American chiefs renounced the fight and moved to reservations, while Sitting Bull refused to surrender and became a strongly-respected tribal leader.

By then though, white settlers, missionaries, and railroad workers, were increasingly moving all across the United States, while Native Americans were forced to abandon their tribal lands. Sitting Bull, tried to unite his people against this invasion, trying to make peace and trade with the whites. But when in 1876 gold was discovered in the *Black Hills* (a holy place for the Sioux) and his people were forced away from their reservation in the area, Sitting Bull took up arms against the whites and refused to be moved.

He then, followed by other Native warriors, decided to camp nearby the *Little Big Horn River*. And so, when Colonel *George Armstrong Custer* attacked the Indian tribes, he did not realize that more than 3,000 Native Americans had left their reservations to follow Sitting Bull.

Custer rapidly lost many troops... and his life as well!

This victory made Sitting Bull a hero among the great Native American leaders such as *Crazy Horse* and Apache *Geronimo*. But the Native Americans' end was already signed, as Custer's death brought thousands

more Army soldiers to the area who attacked the Lakota Indians in the following year, forcing them to surrender. Once again Sitting Bull refused to, and in May 1877 crossed the Canadian border, where he remained in exile for a number of years, until hunger and cold finally forced him, his family, and a few remaining warriors to surrender.

Ironically, in 1885, Sitting Bull was allowed to join *Buffalo Bill Wild West* show. By then the so called "Wild West" did no longer

exist and he and Buffalo Bill had become two circus characters!

Now answer these questions:

1. Who was Tatanka-Iyatanka?
2. Which tribe did Sitting Bull belong to?
3. What happened in 1876 in the Black Hills?
4. Why were those hills so important for the Natives?
5. What did Sitting Bull try to do with the other Native tribes?
6. What happened at Little Big Horn?
7. How many Indian warriors joined with Sitting Bull at Little Big Horn?
8. Who were Crazy Horse and Geronimo and what did they share with Sitting Bull?
9. What happened to Sitting Bull in May 1877 and why did he act so?
10. How do you think Sitting Bull felt to be in a circus with Buffalo Bill? Why do you think he decided to act so?

