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# ON THE TRAIL

It was the spring of 1876. The U.S. Army had a job to do. Troops were on the move. The Sioux Nation was their focus. Many of the group's members lived on the Great Sioux **Reservation**. That's in South Dakota. Others roamed free. Sitting Bull led many. Crazy Horse guided others.

The Army had to find them. Its goal was to gather the tribes. Then troops would make the people move. Tribes had to go to a reservation.





George Custer



Alfred Terry

George Custer was going to help. He led the 7th **Cavalry**. It went to Fort Abraham Lincoln. The fort was in Bismarck. Today, that's in North Dakota.

There, the cavalry became part of a bigger force. It had 879 men. Alfred Terry led them. He was a general.

The troops set out. It was May 17. They went west. A month passed. Then a trail was found. It ran along Rosebud Creek. Custer's men were sent ahead. They followed the trail.

It was June 25. The men found a camp. Sitting Bull lived there. Crazy Horse did too. A river ran nearby. Its name was Little Bighorn.



Sitting Bull



Crazy Horse



## Fast Fact

The Battle of the Little Bighorn was one of the fights that erupted during the Sioux Wars. These conflicts took place during the last 50 years of the 19th century. Native Americans who fought in these battles were trying to keep their land and resources safe from the U.S. government and white settlers.

The Battle of the Little Bighorn

Army troops attacked. A battle began. It was big. This was the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

Custer and his men were on one side. Scouts helped. These were Arikara and Crow men. Sioux were on the other side. Thousands of them fought. They had **allies**. Some were Arapaho men. Others were Cheyenne.



There were great numbers of us, some on horseback, others on foot. Back and forth in front of Custer we passed, firing all of the time.”

—Eagle Bear

Defeating the Sioux was Custer’s job. But a win meant more to Crazy Horse. It was about saving his way of life. This also could mean a bigger victory. Maybe it could end the fight between the Sioux and the Army. Crazy Horse thought that. Other **warriors** agreed. They believed they’d be free. Then they could live as their **ancestors** had. But that wouldn’t be the case.