



Fate of the Dakota
A STUDY AID

Before the War – Introduction & Chapter 1

1. What were some of the causes of the U.S. – Dakota War? Name as many as you can. Pick two and explain them in detail.
2. The main character, Alfred Riggs, is the son of a missionary, Stephen Riggs. What is a missionary and what impact did they have on the Dakota Indians such as Little Crow? In what ways did they help the Dakota and how did they hurt them?
3. What was the village of Kaposia? Why was it important?
4. Why do you think Little Crow ultimately agreed to lead his men in war? What would you have done if you were in Little Crow's position?

The Attacks – Chapters 2, 3, 4 & 5

1. Why do you think the settlers were so surprised by the Dakota attack at the Redwood Agency? What do you think the relationship between the Dakota and the settlers was like prior to the war?
2. In chapter 3, the main character Alfred Riggs is taken to the Dakota Indians war camp where he became one of the captives. Where did the author gather information about the captive's experience? Using sources other than those found in the text, can you find some evidence about what the captives of the U.S. – Dakota War went through?
3. In chapter 3, the Dakota Indian Wacouta protected and helped several of the captives. Why do you think he helped them? Were there other Dakota Indians that felt the same way?
4. Fort Ridgely was attacked twice by the Dakota Indians during the U.S. – Dakota War. Where was Fort Ridgely and why was it built?
5. During the U.S. – Dakota War, Fort Ridgely was manned by soldiers in "Minnesota's volunteer regiments" who had little military training. Can you think of a reason why, in 1862, there were no army regulars to defend the fort?

Retreat, Birch Coulee, and Intertribal Conflict – Chapters 6, 7, & 8

1. Who was Paul Mazekutemani and how would you describe his role in the U.S. – Dakota War? Do you agree with what he tried to do?
2. The author identifies two different camps. Can you identify these two groups and describe how they were different? What if you were a Dakota Indian, which camp would you be a part of and why?
3. In Chapter 7, the Dakota Indian Wabasha told Alfred Riggs to "shoot up." Can you verify that information from the sources? What other quotes or information from chapter 7 can you locate in sources and historical documents?

4. What do you think about the letters between Little Crow and Colonel Sibley. Imagine you are Little Crow or Colonel Sibley and write a letter explaining your position and what outcomes you desire.

Battle of Wood Lake, Arrest and Trials – Chapters 9, 10, 11 & 12

1. After the Battle of Wood Lake, Little Crow and his followers fled from Minnesota. Do you think it was difficult for them to leave their homeland? Have you ever had to leave your home for an extended period of time? If the army came with guns to your house and said your whole family must leave, what would your feelings be like?
2. Following the war, over four hundred Dakota Indians were tried before a military commission. After reading about how the trials took place, imagine that you are one of the Dakotas. Do you think the trials were fair? Now imagine you are a settler who lost loved ones during the war. Would that change your opinion?

Executions and Aftermath – Chapters 13, 14 & Epilogue

1. After the war, 38 Dakota Indians were hanged while the rest were imprisoned or expelled and no longer allowed to live in the state of Minnesota. Do you think this was right? What might have been a better solution?
2. There were a lot of people and groups of people involved in the U.S. – Dakota War. Name as many groups of people that you can think of. It is important to remember that everyone involved had their own wants, needs, grievances and perspectives. Pick one group, and try to explain how they might have presented their situation to others.
3. The United States – Dakota War of 1862 was a tragic and complicated part of Minnesota history. Why do you think it helps to learn about what happened? How do you think it affects the way Dakota people feel about their situation today? What can you do now to improve upon our past and create a better future?

Historical Inquiry

1. Now you be the historian. What part of the U.S. – Dakota War would you like to learn more about? Find and identify some resources that will help you answer that question. Report what you've learned by citing the evidence from your sources.