



Indian Education

Montana Office of Public Instruction
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Crow Reservation Timeline Crow Tribe

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The Montana Tribal Histories Reservation Timelines are collections of significant events as referenced by tribal representatives, in existing texts, and in the Montana tribal colleges' history projects. While not all-encompassing, they serve as instructional tools that accompany the text of both the history projects and the *Montana Tribal Histories: Educators Resource Guide*. The largest and oldest histories of Montana Tribes are still very much oral histories and remain in the collective memories of individuals. Some of that history has been lost, but much remains vibrant within community stories and narratives that have yet to be documented.

Time Immemorial Creation Story – “First Maker” wandered the world that is covered with water. He sent the ducks down searching for what was below. The little duck returned first with a plant and then with mud. “First Maker and the ducks made the world. Then they divided the world into sections by placing water here and there. They made the sky, the plants, the trees and the animals. They made the stars, the sun and the moon.” (Crow Tribal History, Little Big Horn College.) “Long-ago Times” – The ancestral tribe of the Crow live in the “Land of Forests and Many Lakes,” the upper Great Lakes area of Canada and the United States

1450 - The Crow Migration west. Fourteen groups of runners were sent out in different directions to search for food. One returned with buffalo meat. The Tribe set out in this direction. During this time, Crow Chiefs No Intestines (No Vitals), and Red Scout fasted and prayed to receive guidance for their journey. Both received instructions. Red Scout was given an ear of corn to plant, and advised to settle permanently, growing corn for sustenance. No Intestines was told to travel west toward the mountains and was given a pod of seeds to plant there – they were sacred and their use would be revealed to them. When they reached the Missouri River country, they settled with the Mandan for some time. However, heeding First Maker’s instructions, No Intestines decided to continue the journey west. According to Crow oral history, this journey first led them to the region around Cardston, Alberta. Determining that the winters were too long, the band headed south, possibly going all the way to the Great Salt Lake. The journey then continued east and south through land that is now Wyoming, Colorado, Oklahoma, Arkansas and possibly Missouri. “Ancient lullabies and war songs mention an Arrow River (Red River of Oklahoma).” (Joe Medicine Crow. History: Crow. Ethnic Heritage Studies Program. Bozeman, MT: Center for Bilingual/Multicultural Education, College of Education, Montana State University, 1982. p. 2) Turning north and west again, they eventually came to the Big Horn country in southern Montana, which was to end up being their permanent homeland.

1700 – 1735 - The Crow acquired horses from Indians near Great Salt Lake.

1743 – French-Canadian traders, the La Verendrye brothers, met a group of Crow camped at the confluence of the Big Horn and Little Big Horn Rivers.

1805 – 1806 – Crow met Clark at Pompey’s Pillar.

1825 – The first treaty, The Friendship Treaty, signed between the Crow and the U.S. Crow leader Long Hair was the tribal signatory, while Crow leader Sore Belly refused to sign.

1840-1850 – Smallpox epidemics found their way to Crow country. The tribe suffered a staggering population loss. The tribal population estimated at 10,000 in 1830, declined to approximately 2,000.

1851 – The Fort Laramie Treaty with the Crow, Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Shoshone, Assiniboine, Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara. The Crow boundaries identified 38 million acres as the tribe’s territory: “The territory of the Crow Nation, commencing at the mouth of Powder River on the Yellowstone; thence up Powder River to its source; thence along the main range of the Black Hills and Wind River Mountains to the head-waters of the Yellowstone River; thence down the Yellowstone River to the mouth of Twenty-five Yard Creek; thence to the head waters of the Muscle-shell River; thence down the Muscle-shell River to its mouth; thence to the head-waters of Big Dry Creek, and thence to its mouth.” Article V, 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie.

1864 – A battle with the Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho who outnumbered Crow warriors 10 to 1, but the Crow were successful in turning the enemy party back. The location of this battle was near present day Pryor.

1865 – The Bozeman Trail was named after John Bozeman who used the trail as a shorter route to the Montana gold fields. Other miners and settlers followed. The trail cut through the Powder River country that was important hunting territory for many tribes, including bands of the Sioux nation. The Crow assisted the U.S. military in protecting travelers on the trail. In 1868, the Sioux negotiated the closing of the trail.

1868 – The second Fort Laramie Treaty reduced Crow lands to eight million acres.

1869 – A government agency was established in Crow country, on Mission Creek (Hide Scraper Creek).

1870 – The Crow were expected to move to the reduced territory as defined by the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty.

1872 – The agency was moved to the Rosebud River, near present day Absarokee, Montana.

1876 – The Crow continued to serve as scouts in the U.S. Military. Crow scouts were primarily responsible for preventing a more serious defeat of General Crook at the Rosebud Battle with the Lakota and Cheyenne.

1881 – 100 Crow tribal members selected allotments. Provisions for individual tribal member allotments were outlined in the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty. Land assignments of 320 acres were to be recorded in the “Crow Land Book.”

1882 – Tribal grazing leases began.

1882 – Congressional Act diminished Crow lands. The land cession brought \$750,000 in compensation, to be paid out annually at \$30,000 by the Secretary of Interior. Funds were to be used for homes and farming and ranching needs.

1882 – Congressional Act for the Northern Pacific Railroad right-of-way provided the railroad with 5,084 acres for which \$25,000 was provided in compensation – to be spent for the Crow at the discretion of the Secretary of Interior.

1883 – The government boarding school was moved to present day Crow Agency. Parents were threatened to send their children to school or their rations would be withheld. The first three Crow children were sent to Carlisle Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

1884 – The agency is moved once again, this time to its present site at Crow Agency.

1885 – Chief Plenty Coups made his first trip to Washington DC with demands for his people.

1886 – Catholic Jesuits founded St. Xavier Mission in Crow country. The school received government support in the way of school supplies and 160-acre land grant.

1889 – Crow Agency boarding school was built.

1890 – 1900s - Allotment

1891 – Congressional Act for cession of land on the western portion of the reservation – nearly two million acres. \$940,000 was provided in compensation. The Secretary of the Interior directed expenditures of the money. Crow tribal members could hold allotments in the ceded portion.

1891 – Tribal grazing leases changed to a bidding system.

1891 – St. Charles Mission was founded near present-day Pryor.

1900 – Chief Plenty Coups made a second trip to Washington DC, demanding just payment for the Burlington Railroad right-of-way across the reservation and employment for Crow men.

1903 – The Annual Crow Fair was established.

1903 – A Baptist Home Mission School was started at Lodge Grass. It became quite popular, as it was a day school.

1904 – Congressional Act diminished Crow lands again, in the northern part of the reservation. The reservation land base was now its present size, 2.3 million acres. No lump sum compensation was given, but funds provided for a variety of items: horses, cattle, sheep, irrigation, fencing, school buildings, etc.

1914 – Crow men answered the call to military service during World War I.

1915 – Senate hearings produced evidence of incompetent administration of the Crow Reservation.

1920 – The Crow Act sponsored by the Crow Tribe, allotted the remainder of the reservation into tracts to every enrolled member of the tribe. “Provisions of the Crow Act were the following: allotment of everything except the mountains, patents-in fee to competent Indians, conveyance to anyone could not exceed 640 acres of farming land or 1280 acres of grazing land, tribal roles, mineral rights are held by tribe, no more irrigation systems without Crow consent, no liquor, consolidation of the Crow Fund, enrollment and competency commission, land to State in return for admission of Crow children into public schools, revolving fund.” (Government. Ethnic Heritage Studies Program: Plains Indians, Cheyenne-Cree-Crow-Lakota Sioux. Bozeman, MT: Center for Bilingual/Multicultural Education, College of Education, Montana State University, 1982.)

1920 – 40s – The Tribal Council divided into committees when necessary to address multiple issues. Examples of committees were: Schools, Oil, Hospital, Budget, Leases, Law and Order, etc.

1921 – Chief Plenty Coups died.

1927 – At this time there were 11 public schools, four Catholic schools, and one Protestant school operating on the reservation.

1934 –The Crow Tribe rejected the Indian Reorganization Act.

1935 – The Indian Reorganization Act provides \$190,000 for 50 projects on the Crow Reservation.

1948 – The Crow adopted their own model of a tribal Constitution.

1958 – The Tribe sold Yellowtail Dam site and reservoir area for 2.5 million dollars.

1961 – Constitution amended.

1962 – Court of Indian Claims awarded the Crow Tribe \$10,242,984.70 as just compensation for lands taken.

1987 – A Supreme Court decision awarded millions to the Crow Nation in the Crow Severance Tax Case against the State of Montana.

1987– The Crow Tribe filed dereliction of duties and breach of trust responsibility suit against the U. S. Government in regard to Section 2 of the 1920 Crow Allotment Act.

2002–The Crow Tribe passed a new Tribal Constitution.

