"The Touch of Civilization"

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Comparing American and Russian expansion and internal colonization of the Sioux and the Kazakhs naturally leads to a discussion of the martial resistance by the indigenous population against the imperial power. The internal colonizer destroyed native sovereignty as it asserted social, political, and economic authority over the lands and peoples colonized. Scholars, politicians, commentators, and participants in the events have long chronicled the wars, rebellions, uprisings, revolts, battles, and massacres so often associated with the conquest of the Sioux and the Kazakhs that a complete retelling of the Battle of the Little Bighorn or Srym Batyr’s rebellion does not necessarily need to be done again. American scholars examined so many facets of the so-called Indian Wars that comparing them to the Kazakh revolts reveals the idiosyncratic nature inherent in each battle, war, revolt, or conflict but does not illuminate a feature, context, or perception not already scrutinized by other scholars.

More importantly for this comparison, it was the process, the perceptions, and the consequences of conquest and colonization rather than an examination of the separate events or episodes that matter. But Sioux and Kazakh efforts to resist reinforced American and Russian perceptions that the nomads must settle and that pioneers and peasants must occupy the land. Sioux and Kazakh opposition bolstered American and Russian views that the natives were naturally uncivilized communities. When examined through the prism of process and consequence rather than the particulars of each confrontation, resistance
and suppression became part of the internal colonization. Therefore, this chapter examines the process of military conquest—the comparable objectives, policies, and consequences—that resulted in the eventual suppression of Sioux and Kazakh martial resistance.

DIFFERENT OBJECTIVES

In the first half of the nineteenth century, both the United States and Russia initiated active military and commercial expansionist policies into the northern plains and the Kazakh Steppe. Initially, it was an economic penetration—chiefly by fur trappers and merchants. The expanded military movement often followed economic expansion into those regions in order to secure trade and the movement of goods and people. In the first half of the nineteenth century, pioneer and peasant expansion was a modest, relatively measured movement that accelerated rapidly after 1850. Consequently, the United States and tsarist Russia both demarcated land and subsequently allotted it in ways that restricted independent movement by the Sioux and the Kazakhs. Both the United States and Russia attempted to contain the indigenous populations’ access to the land and resources necessary for the Sioux and the Kazakhs to exercise their traditional economic, social, and political sovereignty. Simply put, the colonizer wanted the colonized to stop being nomads.

Through various mechanisms, the United States and Russia managed literally and metaphorically to divide and conquer the Sioux and the Kazakhs. The concept of divide and conquer may not have always guided the policies, or even considered the objective, but that was the practice. By gradually asserting political sovereignty over the Sioux and the Kazakhs before completing their physical subjugation, the United States and Russia ushered in an era of armed resistance. The United States and Russia mistakenly anticipated the exact opposite Sioux and Kazakh reaction. They drew lines on the map and expected the Sioux and the Kazakhs to acknowledge and respect those lines. The Americans and Russians expressed surprise, disappointment, and exasperation when the Sioux and the Kazakhs exhibited independent decision-making and hostility to American and Russian political actions.

Up to the 1820s, the situation in the northern plains and the Kazakh Steppe generally reflected American and Russian expectations of control rather than the reality. The Americans and Russians desired essentially two things: initially, recognition of American and Russian political authority followed by peace among the peoples living there. Acknowledgment by the Sioux and the Kazakhs of the first objective required the colonizer to suppress Sioux and Kazakh political
sovereignty and a serious military commitment by the Americans and Russians before the second objective: a safe and secure resettlement for American pioneers and Russian peasants. Peace in the northern plains meant signing numerous treaties with all of the tribes that lived there, including the Sioux, Crow, Blackfeet, Cheyenne, and others. It was a slow, piecemeal process that took several decades to accomplish. The United States used these treaties to force territorial concessions and required the various tribes to settle on reservations in order to prevent conflicts between each other and, more importantly, conflicts with white Americans who were moving through the northern plains or settling on land that tribes claimed as their own. The United States managed to divide and conquer the northern plains from the 1820s to the 1870s.

By aligning with one band or tribe, the United States separated different Indian tribes and bands from one another, a process it followed with the Sioux. In a strict legal sense, treaties signed by one band—for example, a treaty with one band of the Santee—did not obligate the Teton to adhere to its stipulations; however, in practice, the United States often tried to impose its will on the so-called non-treaty Sioux. Band by band, tribe by tribe, the United States was able to isolate and conquer the northern plains and the Sioux. The Russians employed a similar tactic; clan by clan or horde by horde, the Russians were able to divide and conquer the Kazakhs and the Kazakh Steppe. From the American and Russian perspectives, expansion meant security and enhanced trade; the incremental divide and conquer was more the result of American and Russian actions rather than an articulated strategy, but one that worked to isolate and incorporate disaffected and potentially loyal and peaceful Sioux and Kazakhs from the more hostile bands, clans, and hordes. In the Russian case, the government believed it had to end what was, essentially, a Kazakh civil war exacerbated by Russian policies designed to exert imperial control in the Kazakh Steppe from the 1820s to the 1840s. At no time in either case were the Sioux or the Kazakhs able to unite into a single military, economic, or territorial force that—even unlikely given the military and economic superiority of the United States and Russia—might possibly resist a determined, expanding imperial power.

There was, however, a notable difference in the comparison of American and Russian expansion and internal colonization: chronology. While the Americans slowly edged into the plains between 1820 and the 1840s, the Russians were consolidating their control in the Kazakh Steppe. In 1847 the last major rebellion by the Kazakhs against Russian expansion culminated with the death of Kenesary Kasymov, which essentially ended more than a century of sporadic Kazakh resistance to Russian expansion. For the rest of the nineteenth century, the Russian
government consolidated its control of the Kazakhs and the steppe, and by 1881
the Russians conquered, annexed, and colonized the central Asian khanates
(Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand). Because of this continued Russian expansion,
by the 1890s, Russia and Britain resolved their geopolitical differences and
agreed to boundary commissions to establish the southernmost extension of the
Russian imperial border on the Persian-Afghan frontier. By comparison, the
American conquest of the Sioux and the northern plains occurred much more
quickly and later in the century but without the similar imperial, geopolitical
dynamics and rivalries in central Asia that frequently erupted between Britain
and Russia (the era called “the Great Game”).

In the United States, the federal government resolved its northern and south-
ern borders with British Canada and Mexico by 1848. The Spanish and British
were still powerful imperial rivals who could be potent impediments to any
American expansionist agenda. American expansion and settlement ultimately
required defined boundaries and stability. Conversely, it was the absence of
defined boundaries and the persistence of instability that propelled Russian
expansion into the Kazakh Steppe and central Asia. Thus, in comparison, the
United States made certain, although not as a prerequisite, that its imperial
rivals, Britain and Spain, agreed on defined, international boundaries before
the massive westward movement began in earnest. Russia, on the other hand,
used the absence of defined boundaries to justify its expansion and colonization
into the Kazakh Steppe and, later, Turkestan.

Therefore, unlike the Russian-Kazakh case, in which the violent resistance
to Russian expansion occurred between 1732 and 1847, most scholars argue
that Sioux resistance to American expansion starts in 1851, with the signing
of the Fort Laramie Treaty, and concludes in 1890 at Wounded Knee. Some
scholars claim the resistance ended in 1877–1878, with the death of Crazy
Horse. Regardless of which dates are used, Kazakh resistance ends in the
first half of the century, whereas the Sioux resistance is a second-half-of-the-
century story that accelerated rapidly after the American Civil War. Despite
this temporal difference, throughout the nineteenth century, the United States
and Russia unquestionably planned, revised, and implemented the economic,
political, social, and cultural policies of subjugation.

One other distinction to acknowledge, but far more difficult to evaluate, was
that the trade goods that the Americans and Russians desired differed consider-
ably. Trade and settlement, in a sense, differed in these two cases. One reason
was that the northern plains initially was the route to someplace else during
much of the nineteenth century—meaning that migrants going to the Montana
or Colorado goldfields or Oregon were not the vulnerable or rich targets of
opportunity for the Sioux. That was not the case in the steppe, as Kazakhs frequently attacked Russian or central Asian caravans throughout the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. The Sioux facilitated the early nineteenth-century trade, but it was nearly a one-product (fur) trade that attracted the British, French, and Americans. The Kazakhs’ trade was more diversified, as they supplied the Russians with wool, meat, livestock, and hides. The Sioux and the Kazakhs desired manufactured products as well as modern weapons, ammunition, and powder—items that the United States and Russia were equally reluctant to trade.

The Russians wanted to tap into the central Asian markets, trading with merchants from China, Persia, and the Ottoman Empire who visited the ancient Silk Road market towns of Bukhara and Samarkand. Because the Americans were not sending large caravans of trade through the northern plains, with the goal of returning with goods from elsewhere, the need to protect the trade differed somewhat. In time, the Russian government built fortified lines that presumably separated Russian territory from the rest of central Asia—particularly Turkestan and the southern Kazakh Steppe. The boundary crept over the territory claimed, or at least used, by the Kazakhs, whereas the United States superficially cloaked Sioux lands within American territorial boundaries, initially moved through it, but American pioneers ultimately came to settle on it. Contiguous expansion and settlement was more common in Russia than the pattern in the United States, although Americans claimed the northern plains before physically incorporating western territories such as California or Oregon. As a consequence, the Americans leapfrogged Sioux territory due to the California gold rush, the Mexican-American War, and the boundary demarcation between British Canada and the United States— all occurring in the 1840s. In Russia, expansion was one small step after another; in the United States, it was one giant leap.

In addition, there was an element to the trade that is ubiquitous in the histories written about the conquest of North America generally that is almost completely absent in similar histories about Russian eastward expansion: the use of liquor to bilk the natives. There is no question among scholars of American history that traders, merchants, and others used alcohol and hard spirits excessively and to the detriment of Indians throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The American government worked hard—some may question how hard—to obstruct the trade and prevent alcohol from ever reaching Indians; but it was, by all accounts, a serious issue in which simple prohibitions failed to stop it. Many Indians also tried to stop the trade. Nevertheless, little disagreement exists about the role liquor played in the American expansion and dispossession of Indians from the land; similar evidence was not a part of the Russian experience. There is anecdotal evidence about drunken Russians on the frontier,
but they were not part of the conquest and colonization story in the American example.³

Another interesting, but somewhat minor, difference is that, unlike the Sioux Wars of the nineteenth century, there are no infamous battles or massacres that one can point to as turning points or seminal moments in the Kazakh resistance to Russian expansion. There was no Grattan Massacre, no Fetterman Massacre, and certainly no equivalent to the Battle of the Little Bighorn in the Russian conquest and colonization of the Kazakhs.⁴ There were, however, prolonged “rebellions,” as the Russians defined them, led by charismatic, generally enigmatic figures. There were no large-scale, pitched battles; the vast majority of these encounters were relatively small skirmishes or raids.⁵ In a sense, that differs little from the well-known violent encounters between the American military and the Sioux, or even American civilians and the Sioux. That does not mean, however, that subsequent scholarship neglected to examine the rebellions. Quite the contrary, it is more likely that Russian children do not know the name or exploits of Ablai Khan or Kenesary Kasymov. Americans, on the other hand, know the names of Sitting Bull or Crazy Horse. The reason—or so it seems—is because there were few occasions during Russia’s expansion into the Kazakh Steppe that scholars can identify as major, seminal battles. The Russians always considered these conflicts and skirmishes to be merely rebellions and not wars because after 1732 the Russian government considered the Kazakhs subjects of the empire. Moreover, and perhaps as a consequence, during the
Soviet era, scholars interpreted the rebellions as little more than feudal reactions by khans and sultans who sought to oppress their own people rather than submit to Russian rule.6

On the other hand, the United States referred to conflicts with the Sioux as wars. In a practical sense, Red Cloud’s War or the Black Hills’ War were comparable military events to rebellions by Srym Batyr or Kenesary Kasymov. Red Cloud, Sitting Bull, and Crazy Horse rebelled and resisted American expansion as much as Srym or Kenesary rebelled and resisted Russian expansion.7 The Americans called them wars, but they differed little from the military efforts the Kazakhs conducted against the Russians. Interestingly, America had its celebrated and tragic Indian Wars in the nineteenth century; Russia had its celebrated and tragic wars in the Caucasus and central Asia but not in the Kazakh Stepppe. For the Russians, the major wars or battles that captured the public’s attention—comparable to Red Cloud’s War or the Battle of the Little Bighorn—occur in the Caucasus against Imam Shamil or, later, against the Turkmen and the tragic Battle of Geok-Tepe. The Russians, however, never defined or described the more than century-long struggle to subjugate the Kazakhs as a war.8 In the minds of Russian officials, from the moment of Abulkhair’s 1732 oath, Kazakhs were subjects of the Russian Empire. In that context, subjects rebelled and surrendered political sovereignty to the emperor, but they did not go to war against the colonizer. Nevertheless, in a comparable sense and in that context, as Robert M. Utley noted, “Every important Indian war since 1870 [was] essentially a war not of concentration but of rebellion—of Indians rebelling against reservations they had already accepted in theory if not in fact.”9

Thus, to call the resistance a war or a rebellion does not change the simple fact that the Sioux and the Kazakhs fought to prevent the Americans and the Russians from expanding into the plains and the steppe. These wars or rebellions were a response to imperial expansion, territorial loss, and internal colonization. The Russians interpreted Abulkhair’s 1732 oath differently than Americans interpreted their government’s practice of signing treaties with the Sioux. This may also account for the two different terms—wars or rebellions—used to define Sioux and Kazakh resistance.

CONCEPTS OF SUBMISSION

Following independence, the United States adopted many elements of British economic and political policies in its relations with Indians. It was not until 1789 that article 1, section 8 of the US Constitution assigned and preserved the conduct of Indian relations. According to the Constitution, it gave Congress
the power to “regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.” Treaties throughout the nineteenth century echoed British practice, shaped partially by the Proclamation of 1763—a decree designed to acknowledge Indian rights to land but also to establish the only legal procedure to extinguish that right. Treaties became the principal instrument of Indian-British, and subsequently American-Indian, relations. According to Stuart Banner, after American independence, the treaties represented “strong political pressures to acquire land quickly and cheaply. The result was a dramatic change in the method of obtaining Indian land. The federal government began to dictate to tribes the extent of land they would be allowed to occupy.”

Until 1871 the United States understood that treaties, in concept and practice, operated between politically sovereign entities; however, most treaties signed between the United States and some Sioux bands were more akin to real estate ventures than transactions between sovereign peoples.

The Russians, on the other hand, never signed treaties with the Kazakhs. Throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century, the tsarist government administered oaths rather than employed legal documents. The Russians simply annexed the land and claimed sovereignty over the people living there. Whereas the British and, later, Americans took “great pains to establish the legality, morality, and philosophical legitimacy of their possession and occupation of new lands,” the Russians, according to Valerie Kivelson, appear “to have not lost a wink of sleep over this issue.” Moreover, as Russia lacked a constitution, government-native relations were always the prerogative of the tsar, his or her government, or its official representatives. Once the Russian government administered an oath, it assumed that the people—including Kazakhs, Poles, Georgians, and others—became subjects of the empire. It assumed that they voluntarily surrendered their political sovereignty to the tsar or tsarina. From the Russian perspective, treaties were legal accords agreed to only by coequal sovereigns.

After a subject people surrendered their sovereignty through an agreement sworn to by a khan or some other recognized leader, treaties were superfluous and irrelevant. The treaties in the United States, however, served a somewhat different purpose. The United States ratified 367 Indian treaties, as well as others Congress never ratified, from 1778 to 1868. The vast majority of these treaties forced land concessions; or, to describe it more simply, these treaties created a legal mechanism to get land from Indians but did not affect their sovereignty. In fact, the United States needed sovereign Indian nations so that the federal government could sign treaties beneficial to the government. Initially, treaties between the United States and various tribes did not subvert Indian sovereignty.
to the American government; however, in Russia, the system of oath-taking was, in the Russian mind, a clear act of submission.

THE TROUBLE WITH FRANCE

Despite these differing concepts of submission to the prerogatives of the colonizer, during the era of early expansion, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the United States and Russia both administered relations with the Sioux and the Kazakhs as military matters. Shortly after establishing the first executive branch departments—which included state, treasury, and war—the US Congress placed management for Indian affairs in the War Department.14 The Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 laid the groundwork for American settlement in these territories. The passage of these acts, according to historian Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., created a “novel colonial system” because these new territories, after achieving statehood, incorporated easily into the federal system as coequals. Ohio, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, for example, were initially territories, as Berkhofer argued, to distinguish American expansion “from the old imperial type.”15 Historian Jeffrey Ostler described the process as a way to establish “new colonies that were organized into territories and then states.”16 The administration of indigenous peoples in the United States started first under the Department of War but was placed later under Interior Department control. The Russians, on the other hand, never doubted that they expanded as an “old imperial type” that colonized newly acquired territory, but territorial administration was always under military control. Civilians and bureaucrats always reported to military governor-generals, a structure that differed markedly from the American administrative process. Throughout the nineteenth century, control of Indian affairs in the United States periodically erupted into heated debate and power struggles between the Interior and War Departments and often marred relations between the two. It was a political and institutional rivalry, often bitter and controversial. Russia did not experience a similar debate. Governance in the provinces was a military matter, although a Russian Department of Internal Affairs existed and administered some native (inorodtsy “alien” or “of another people”) civil concerns. Different Russian ministries surveyed the land and administered resettlement, but political rule in the steppe was always under military rule. An interesting and parallel element to the process of conquering and eventually colonizing the plains and the steppe originates in the shadow of the Napoleonic Wars, which diverted Russia’s attention and eventually ensnared the United States as well.
In the nascent United States, the Napoleonic Wars caused the young republic to vacillate between enthusiasm for the French Revolution and anger at both the French and the British for the impunity with which they violated American neutrality; seized American ships, men, and goods; and generally ignored American protests and sovereignty. As the situation changed in Europe, it proved beneficial for the United States in ways that can never be overstated. The American purchase of the Louisiana Territory from the French in 1803 was, perhaps, the most significant imperial step taken by the United States in its history. It fundamentally altered the United States, creating in one stroke of the pen a country that expanded, almost effortlessly, past the magnificent Mississippi watershed to the Rocky Mountains. Just one year before the sale, Napoleon declared that France must “engage herself not to sell or alienate in any manner the property or enjoyment of Louisiana.”17 The Spanish opposed the sale, which Napoleon simply ignored in his need to raise revenue and divest France of unwanted real estate. But events in Europe, American diplomacy, and Napoleon’s mercurial character resulted in such a momentous occasion that historian Henry Adams later euphorically exclaimed that the “annexation of Louisiana was an event so portentous as to defy measurement . . . but as a matter of diplomacy it was unparalleled, because it cost almost nothing.”18

TOOLS OF SUBJUGATION
The full extent of the Louisiana Territory was unclear; the United States was uncertain of the boundaries and had little knowledge about the people and resources that it just paid $15 million (less than three cents per acre) to own. The course of American and Sioux relations, however, changed significantly after the Louisiana Purchase. Some Americans were already trading with the Sioux prior to the acquisition, but those meetings and trade opportunities were sporadic. In addition, the Louisiana Purchase changed the relationship between the United States and Great Britain in the northern plains. Up to this point, the British still dominated the fur trade, and the Americans were a minor annoyance. The United States controlled Ohio, but American pioneers were aggressively expanding and settling in regions east of the Mississippi River.

President Thomas Jefferson had plans and imperial ambitions to exert American authority in the newly acquired lands, and he quickly, and somewhat quietly, dispatched various expeditions to explore the territory, hopefully to find waterways to the Pacific Ocean and to inform the Indians that they had a new “Great Father” in Washington. The Lewis and Clark Expedition established trade relations with various tribes, including the Sioux. These expeditions
commercially benefited the United States and enticed Indian tribes away from the more experienced British traders and merchants. For example, in 1805 Zebulon Pike commanded an expedition to explore the upper Mississippi region, where he met some Dakota at Lake Pepin. Pike’s visit with some Santee was far more profitable than Lewis and Clark’s encounter with the Teton. Little Crow, Chief of the Mdewakanton Sioux, visited Pike, who was then traveling on to the mouth of the Minnesota River. Pike signed the first treaty between one band of the Sioux and a representative of the United States.19

Little Crow agreed to relinquish a nine-mile strip of land on both sides of the Mississippi River, from the mouth of the St. Croix River to the Falls of St. Anthony. The United States agreed to pay $2,000. The land was to be used to construct a military and trading post, but it was not until 1819 that the American government started construction of a fort on the newly purchased land. Consequently, Pike’s 1805 treaty apparently opened the door to further land cessions from other Sioux bands after the United States purchased Little Crow’s tract. This treaty also represents the instrument by which the United States began to divide and conquer the Sioux, although it differs slightly from the process employed by the Russians against the Kazakhs.

Russia’s relations with France were complicated and unsettled. The French Revolution horrified Catherine the Great—as an autocrat, no matter how enlightened, it was disturbing to watch from afar a rabble of peasants and revolutionaries execute a fellow monarch. After 1789 Catherine’s relations with France intended to prevent the spread of revolutionary ideology, particularly in the Russian Empire. Ideologies that preached individual liberties, the rights of man, and nationalism were anathema to an autocrat who ruled over a multinational empire. She died in 1796, ending a remarkably complex period in Russian history. Her son, Paul I (1796–1801), was an ignorant sod. His domestic and foreign policies seemingly reflected his unstable mind. An 1801 palace coup ended his erratic reign.

His son, Alexander I, ruled until 1825. From 1801 to 1815, Russia clearly focused its attention on European affairs and the Napoleonic threat. Because of these external issues, Russia’s territorial expansion into the Kazakh Steppe was haphazard. Consequently, Alexander’s Russia sought merely to consolidate its administrative control in the territories behind and along the Irtysh Line. The Russians focused on expanding trade in the Kazakh Steppe and central Asia, not territorial expansion and colonization. Kazakh clans and hordes continued to fight among themselves for access to pastures and territory, raid Russian caravans, and seize goods and Russian and Cossack peasants to sell as slaves in Bukhara, Kokand, and Khiva. The Kazakh Steppe remained a dangerous place for Russians.
More importantly, the allegedly constant conflict in the steppe convinced many Russian officials that only military conquest there could provide the necessary security and stability for trade.

In 1801 the Russian government manufactured the Bukei Horde, a fanciful Kazakh entity designed to reward some Kazakhs for their good behavior by making the Inner Side pastures available. The Bukei Horde, whom the Russians often called the Inner Horde, permitted Bukei’s followers to remain permanently west of the Ural River.²⁰ It made available millions of acres of lush pastures for Kazakh shepherds, but for the Russians it meant improved security along the Irtysh Line. The Russians allowed Bukei to pasture on the Inner Side, between the Ural and Volga Rivers, separating his factions of the Little Horde from other Little Horde clans. His reward for good relations was that Russia acknowledged him as khan and bestowed gifts and lands, which attracted followers but essentially divided Kazakhs between those considered friendly and loyal and those that the Russian government considered hostile and rebellious. Permitting Bukei to pasture on the Inner Side became a measured device to incorporate clans from the Little Horde into the Russian Empire. Bukei’s followers had access to prime grazing land and, equally important, Russian economic and military support and protection from Kazakhs who opposed Bukei.

Some scholars argue that this was part of the Russians’ divide and conquer strategy, but it seems more likely that the Russians were able to take advantage of divisions and internecine conflict in order to penetrate the Kazakh Steppe because, more than anything else, the Russians wanted peace and stability rather than expansion simply for expansion’s sake. By splitting the Little Horde and privileging some Kazakhs with benefits such as pastures, the Russians unwittingly intensified internecine conflicts among the Kazakh clans and hordes rather than secured a more stable environment to increase trade. During the Napoleonic Wars, the United States expanded exponentially, whereas Russia sought merely to consolidate its earlier territorial gains. Nonetheless, each used the opportunity to divide and conquer, albeit in sporadic and tentative ways.

The Americans and Russians used treaties and oaths to secure, as much as possible, friendly relations and trade. Treaties and oaths also, perhaps unwittingly, created wedges in which to reward friendly Sioux and Kazakhs—especially between various Sioux bands and Kazakh clans—in order to pacify and segregate those Sioux and Kazakh who opposed further American and Russian expansion. Allowing Bukei and his supporters to access specifically defined land and favoring certain Kazakh clans with benefits divided Kazakhs among the Little Horde clans and forced them to choose between cooperation and opposition. In the American case, the Sioux bands that signed treaties were favored
with gifts and annuities. Of course, the consequence for this cooperation was the loss of Sioux and Kazakh lands and, concomitantly, their political sovereignty. In each case, the United States and Russia considered these steps necessary actions in order to promote peaceful relations and, more importantly, secure trade and promote agriculture, civilization, and, eventually, assimilation.

This is evident in the United States in the early nineteenth century as Americans hoped to wrest the fur trade away from the British. In 1806 the War Department appointed an agent, Nicholas Boilvin, to the Sacs, but he also had contacts with some Sioux around Prairie du Chien. One of his tasks was to invigorate trade with the various tribes. By 1808 British traders withdrew from the region, opening the trade for American commercial development. At a council held at Prairie du Chien in 1809, many Dakotas expressed a desire for American merchandise. Boilvin seemed confident that American traders could carry on a profitable trade with the upper Mississippi tribes, but American traders did not cultivate the necessary relationships with the Sioux to exploit fully the commercial opportunities following the British departure.\(^{21}\) The process in the steppe, however, favored a more rapid divide-and-conquer process because the Russians had the one thing that some Kazakhs desperately needed: rich pastures that lay behind the Russian fortified lines. The Russians managed to penetrate politically rather than economically at first because they controlled certain lands. The Russians also believed that political control facilitated and secured trade. The United States also wanted to facilitate trade, but the Sioux and other Indian tribes still controlled the land. The United States could claim ownership, but ownership did not represent control.

The era of American dominance in the western fur trade follows the war, despite continued efforts by the British to interfere with American ambitions. The Sioux actively participated in the trade throughout the heyday in the 1820s and 1830s. American fur trader Joshua Pilcher claimed, “no Indians ever manifested a greater degree of friendship for the whites in general, or more respect for our government, than the Sioux.”\(^{22}\) Great fur trade scholar Hiram Chittenden noted that the Yanktons “were the least troublesome of all the Sioux tribes and gave the traders comparatively little annoyance.” He claimed, however, that the Yanktonai were “treacherous, stealthy, vindictive, and caused a great deal of trouble.” He also observed that the Sioux regarded “the approach of the American traders with an unfriendly eye . . . But as time wore on and the traders became firmly established among them, this hostile feeling largely passed away.”\(^{23}\) One reason the Sioux thrived during this period was that the fur trade was changing from beaver and other fine fur to buffalo fur and hides. The Sioux—in particular, bands in the western plains such as the Teton—were more easily able to
facilitate this trade due to the extensive buffalo herds that roamed the plains and prairies, profiting economically and militarily.

In July 1815 the Treaty of Portage des Sioux was signed between the United States and various Sioux bands, although absent from the negotiations were two prominent Sioux chiefs, Wabasha and Little Crow. The essential fact of the treaty was that each party desired “perpetual peace and friendship between all citizens of the United States of America” and the Sioux people. In addition, the treaty stipulated that tribes place themselves “under the protection” of the American government and that “Every injury or act of hostility committed by one or either of the contracting parties against the other, shall be mutually forgiven and forgot.” Doane Robinson described the “great council” that met to haggle out the terms of the treaty “one of the most notable ever held on the continent.” He claimed that, at this time, the Sioux “gave complete submission to the United States government, and since that date, no matter how hostile they may have been in local matters, they have never failed to recognize the sovereignty of the great father at Washington.”

It is difficult to understand how or why the Sioux might ever consider that this treaty represented the complete surrender of their sovereignty to the United States; certainly, later Sioux leaders, such as Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, rejected American domination. This illusion was reminiscent of Russia’s beliefs that Abulkhair’s 1732 oath made all Kazakhs “subjects” of the Russian Empire. Vasilii Grigoriev recognized the futility of Abulkhair’s actions when he wrote that it was merely a trick “by which they hoped to get from us presents and other advantages.” The American-Sioux 1815 treaty—or, in the Kazakh case, the 1732 “oath”—did not accomplish final submission by the Sioux, as Robinson assumed, but required military defeat; and even then, subjugation was political. More importantly, by the 1820s, the US government resolved to extend into the Mississippi and Missouri River valleys and the Russians determined to move deeper into the Kazakh Steppe, where resistance was more strenuous.

**CONFLICT WITHIN THE PLAINS AND THE STEPPE**

One obstacle, however, that both the United States and Russia had to overcome was conflict in the plains and the steppe. There was a major difference in this regard: conflict in the plains was generally between different Indian tribes, whereas in the steppe it was Kazakh against Kazakh. Although the Sioux rarely, if ever, fought another band—intracase conflict—they were often in conflict with neighboring tribes. By the 1820s, many western Sioux bands lived and migrated in and around the Black Hills. They managed to drive the Kiowa out of the region
and laid claim to much of the Missouri River region. The Teton and Yankton/Yanktonai managed to expel other tribes such as the Ponca, Pawnee, Arikara, Mandan, and Crow from the contested territory and became, as Utley exclaimed, the “monarchs of the northern Plains.” Conflict in the plains, however, in the early nineteenth century was the direct result of Sioux, not American, expansion. Americans perceived this intertribal conflict as a serious hindrance to future expansion—a threat to American trappers, traders, and, eventually, settlers. In the Kazakh Steppe, Russian expansion was the reason for the internecine conflict because Russia’s divide-and-conquer strategy caused Kazakh clans and hordes to fight each other for access to pastures and trade. In order for Russian economic penetration into the steppe to increase, the Russian government believed that it needed to end the Kazakh internal fighting and restore order.

In 1803 the Russians managed to hold a council at Orenburg, inviting many of the hostile Kazakh leaders, at which they agreed to promote peace, stability, and trade in the steppe. Governor-General Grigorii Volkonskii issued a decree demanding an end to all conflict. He also stated categorically that Russia would withhold all titles, salaries, and privileges in the event the fighting continued. This declaration outwardly produced the desired affect, and the fighting abated for a while. More likely, the growing presence of Khiva in the southern steppe quelled the fighting among the Kazakhs than any demand made by the governor-general. Much as the Dzungarian threat a century before pushed Abulkhair to seek Russian assistance, the extended threat from Khiva caused some Kazakh khans to move toward improved relations with Russia. In other words, Russian expansion into the steppe, and its accompanied tactics to reward those deemed loyal, further fractured Kazakh society. It increased competition for Russian gifts and, additionally, the desire for Russian protection or support. The one gift, of course, that caused the biggest problem for the Kazakhs was the Russian habit of making certain pastures available to loyal Kazakhs and denying access to those deemed hostile. Land became the imperial wedge used to compel the Kazakhs to submit to Russian expansion.

In the United States, conflicts between tribes ostensibly increased in the plains by the presence of an old enemy that threatened to thwart American claims to the region. In 1819 Secretary of War John Calhoun insisted that the United States exert its influence in Minnesota Territory, fearing that the British were continuing to outmaneuver Americans in the region. Calhoun ordered the army to construct a permanent post in the territory. The fort, initially called Fort St. Anthony—in 1825 it was renamed Fort Snelling—was located at the junction of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers on land acquired by Pike in 1805. Just three years before, the US Congress passed a law calculated to oust British fur traders from American
territory. This act proposed to supplement the trade and intercourse laws with Indians, which stipulated, “licenses to trade with the Indians within the territorial limits of the United States shall not be granted to any but citizens of the United States.”

The line of forts, comparable to the Russian Irtysh Line, became a chain of American military posts—from Fort St. Philip and Fort Jesup in Louisiana, northward to Fort Atkinson in Wisconsin, up to Fort Snelling—and defined, as Utley noted, the “so-called Permanent Indian Frontier.” These posts represented American authority in western regions but did very little to exert that influence successfully to suppress the continuing intertribal warfare or exhibit in any real way American power. It was, however, as Utley astutely described it, a “tantalizing abstraction” that ultimately “crumbled” and “collapsed” under the “wheels of wagons bearing gold seekers to the new US possessions on the Pacific.”

In the 1820s, the Russians reasserted their power and influence in the Kazakh Steppe in the decade following the Napoleonic Wars. Throughout the 1820s, the Russians constructed a second line of forts and posts chiefly within the territory of the Middle and Great Hordes, running from Kokchetav through Akmolinsk to Sergiopol and Baian-Aul; called the Ilek Line (or Iletskii) that connected the provincial capital, Orenburg, closer to the steppe trade. Cossack stanitsy (settlements) were interspersed throughout the Ilek Line, often constructed near the best water sources and wooded regions. According to historian Madhavan Palat, it is only with this new line of forts that Russia entered the steppe “purposefully, politically, administratively, legally, and economically, with the intention of converting it into a colonial appendage, and later, a territory for Russian peasant colonization.” The Americans and the Russians used artificially constructed boundaries to limit Sioux and Kazakh mobility and intertribal or internecine conflicts to provide for more stable environments for traders and settlers.

The anticipated goal in both cases was to maintain the peace in the American plains and prairies or in the Kazakh steppe by assigning territory and forcing the Sioux and the Kazakhs to acknowledge American and Russian political control. In the 1820s and 1830s, the Sioux transformed into a “hegemonic power” that successfully warred against sedentary tribes along the Missouri and by the 1830s had forced the Kiowa from the rich Black Hills and forged alliances with other powerful plains tribes, such as the Cheyenne and Arapahos. Moreover, in order to stop continued attacks against American fur traders, in 1823 an American expedition commanded by Col. Henry Leavenworth joined with a number of Teton and Yankton warriors to punish the Arikara for attacking a party of trappers who had come to their village to trade for some horses. Leavenworth hesitated, although the Sioux were ready to attack the Arikara who had garrisoned
themselves inside their village. According to George Hyde, the Teton were disgusted with Leavenworth’s timidity and packed up their horses, gathered some corn from Arikara fields, stole eight of Leavenworth’s horses as trophies, and departed.\textsuperscript{35} It seems these events greatly diminished any fear or concern these Sioux had regarding American military capabilities, perhaps even evoked some contempt among the Sioux. Indeed, it gave them little to fear that the Americans posed a menace to their supremacy in the northern plains.\textsuperscript{36}

In 1824, Indian agent Lawrence Taliaferro, at the St. Peter’s Agency near Fort Snelling, convinced some Santee to travel to Washington, DC, to meet with American political leaders. While in Washington, Taliaferro convinced Secretary Calhoun to convene a meeting for the following year at Prairie du Chien in order to negotiate treaties with the various Sioux bands under his jurisdiction to end the intertribal warfare that hindered trade. The conference opened in August 1825; the American delegation included Gov. Lewis Cass (Michigan Territory) and Superintendent of Indian Affairs William Clark. The plan they proposed to the Indians who gathered was to draw tribal boundaries that clearly defined hunting lands, which the Americans believed were the root of the conflicts. Creating specific tribal territories dominated American thinking through most treaty-making attempts in the nineteenth century. The American government planned to create inviolable boundaries and segregate tribes from one another and from white Americans. Unfortunately, creating tribal boundaries also required accurate maps, of which there were none.

**RESISTANCE: KAZAKHS**

At this point, it is necessary to examine Sioux and Kazakh resistance through separate contexts because the chronological differences reflect as well the idiosyncratic distinctions. While the grievances expressed by the Sioux and the Kazakhs reveal many similarities, conflating the resistance into a single comparative prism might inadvertently mask the colonizers’ efforts to subjugate the indigenous populations. The Americans and the Russians each wanted the land; they each sought peaceful and stable frontiers and wanted to make room for settlement by pioneers and peasants, but the resistance by the Sioux and the Kazakhs to American and Russian expansion was in direct relation to policies and tactics employed against them. It is to the Kazakhs’ resistance that this chapter now turns.

In 1822, the governor-general of Siberia, Mikhail Speransky, issued reforms that fundamentally altered the relationship between the Kazakhs and the Russian Empire, which reflected the Russian government’s desire to regulate
and demarcate Kazakh mobility. The key element to affect the Kazakhs was the Regulations on the Siberian Kirgiz. Administratively, it segregated Little Horde Kazakhs from the Middle Horde. The Russian government designated Kazakhs from the Little Horde “Orenburg Kirgiz,” whereas Middle Horde Kazakhs became “Siberian Kirgiz.” Great Horde Kazakhs remained outside this structure until the 1840s, when the government designated them “Semirechie Kirgiz.”

Under this administrative system, the Russians subdivided Kazakh administrative forms, comparable to the Russian model that appealed to a bureaucrat’s sensibilities, which cut across traditional Kazakh sociopolitical structures. The Russians restricted movement between districts, and the regulations dictated that Kazakhs could migrate only within their specifically designated territory. In the event a Kazakh aul wanted to leave the district, the government required Kazakhs to receive special permission from a Russian government official or military officer to do so. As land later opened to Russian and Cossack resettlement, the Russian government further limited permission to cross a restricted district boundary. In this case, it differed from American efforts to impose boundaries on Indian tribes, including the Sioux. The Americans believed explicit and recognized boundaries reduced intertribal conflict, not interne-cine Sioux conflicts. The Russians, however, desired to limit conflict between Kazakh auls, clans, or hordes that might affect trade and resettlement. Kazakhs from both the Little and Middle Hordes resisted Russian subjugation with a vigor that caught the Russian government by surprise and represented the most serious rebellions against Russian expansion in the nineteenth century. The goal in both the American and Russian cases was the same—reduce conflict that threatened expansion and trade—but the targets differed. In the United States, intertribal warfare required multiple treaties and negotiations with numerous tribes; in Russia, different Kazakh clans and hordes required frequent negotiation and manipulation.

Between 1824 and 1847, four significant, widespread, and intense Kazakh rebellions against Russian colonization kept the Kazakh Steppe in near-constant turmoil. The Russians interpreted the rebellions as little more than mere banditry, led by men who preferred to remain uncivilized and nomadic; but these rebellions were not just against Russian colonization. In each case, the fight was against Kazakh sultans and khans who superficially benefited from Russian colonization—between those who owed an allegiance to Russia and those who did not. It was particularly strident among Kazakhs in the Bukei Horde supported by Russia and Kazakhs in the Little Horde who lost land, pasture, migration privileges, and opposed Russian colonization. In the Middle Horde, the conflict was equally against Russian colonization and Kazakhs not
allied to Russia. The conflicts were as much anti-Russian as they were part of a Kazakh civil war.38

Following Speransky’s 1822 reforms and the Russian government’s 1824 decision to abolish the title of khan, Kazakhs in the Little Horde, led by Sultan Kaip-Galii Ishimov, rebelled against Russia. A particularly harsh winter in 1826–1827 prompted Kaip-Galii to pasture on the wrong side of the Ilek Line. The Russian government sent a large force to push the Kazakhs back, but as punishment, the government also seized thousands of heads of livestock, prompting violent protest by the Kazakhs. The government’s ham-fisted treatment led to several small, but fierce exchanges between Kaip-Galii’s supporters and Russian troops. By 1828 the Russian government arrested and tried more than two hundred Kazakhs, but Kaip-Galii avoided arrest and fled south to Khiva, where the khan there gave him sanctuary. Russia’s decision to fortify its military line spawned other rebellions.

The Ilek Line intersected rich pastureland and migratory routes claimed by the Tabyn clan of the Little Horde. In response to the Russian expansion, in 1830 the Tabyn clan leader, Zholaman Tlenchiev, rebelled against the Russians and Kazakhs loyal to Russia. Zholaman and his supporters successfully disrupted caravan trade and harassed Cossacks living along the Ilek Line. In 1830 the Russian Orenburg Frontier Commission reported that on one raid against Zholaman the government seized goods, livestock, and prisoners, but that Zholaman escaped.39 Zholaman wrote the commission that he wanted the Ilek Line disbanded—something Russia was unwilling to consider. He claimed in the letter that the Kazakhs had abundant lands to graze their herds, but that after the Russians constructed the Ilek Line, they had none.40 He wrote again to demand that Russia remove the forts. He claimed, “when you return those places, then we will be friends, and if you give them away [to Cossacks], we will be enemies.”41

At the peak of Zholaman’s revolt, and a principal cause for the insurgency, the Russian government allotted roughly 7 million desiatin along the Ural River region for Russian and Cossack peasants.42 In another request to the governor-general, Zholaman requested permission to pasture between the Ural and Ilek Rivers, but the Russians denied this request, fearing that it might spark a land dispute between Kazakhs and Cossacks who settled there.43 It was an example of Russian divide-and-conquer tactics in that by designating only specific territories that Kazakhs might use, the government managed to reward some Kazakhs who exhibited good behavior with access to pasturelands and punish those that it deemed antagonistic. Russian punitive attacks and raids against Zholaman’s aul and the loss of land and livestock eventually forced him to flee but not surrender, as he allied with Sarzhan Kasymov to fight against the Russians.
Zholaman’s decision to ally with Sarzhan reveals the nature of the various rebellions in the steppe between 1824 and 1847. Weakened Kazakh leaders were readily willing on many occasions to join with other Kazakhs of different clans or hordes to oppose Russian expansion. Sarzhan’s rebellion grew significantly, in part because so many Kazakhs from different clans or hordes rallied to his banner. In July 1826 one report suggested he had more than one thousand men under arms and that the “thieves” stole livestock and attacked Kazakhs friendly to Russia. Another report indicated that Kazakhs from several volost abandoned their territory, joined Sarzhan, or attempted illegally to cross over to the Inner Side, which created a crisis in the steppe.

The Russian government attempted to negotiate with Sarzhan, but between 1827 and 1830, the situation in the steppe calmed a bit, and from the Russian perspective, it seemed the rebellion had ended and peace, or at least some security, had been restored. The reason had nothing to with Russia; in fact, Sarzhan and his followers had moved south, and he was involved in an armed struggle with Tashkent—one of the wealthiest cities in central Asia, nominally under Kokand’s control but desired by Bukhara—to control the southern steppe regions. The Russian governor-general called him the “dangerous enemy” who had “significant influence among the Kirgiz [Kazakhs] of the Middle Horde.” Sarzhan continually attacked caravans, raided Kazakh auls loyal to Russia, and in 1835–1836, he attempted to ally with Kokand against the Russians, although Kokand was an inconsistent partner. In the summer of 1836 the Tashkent Kushbegi (ruler) feared that Sarzhan’s influence among Kazakhs living around his dominion potentially threatened his territorial possessions; his assassins managed to kill the unfortunate Kazakh leader.

Sarzhan’s death was not the durable respite that either Russia or Tashkent hoped because his younger brother, Kenesary, quickly assumed command of Sarzhan’s forces and inspired the revolt to become an even broader and more serious obstacle to Russian expansion. The Kenesary Kasymov Revolt was the turning point in the steppe, as Russia committed more men and resources to fighting Kenesary than any other previous Kazakh rebellions. One element that made the revolt unique was that at various times it extended to all three hordes, attracting Kazakhs regardless of clan or horde to rally to his cause. Indeed, the revolt was unique because at different times during the revolt, according to its most prominent historian, Ermukhan Bekmakhanov, every clan allied with Kenesary. The problem was that at no time during the revolt did all clans at the same time ally with Kenesary. Despite what might seem to suggest that he marshaled huge numbers to his side, the best estimates are that at the revolt’s peak (1844–1845), he could field between two thousand to ten thousand “well-armed horsemen.”
In December 1838, Kenesary sent a letter to Tsar Nicholas I (1825–1855) that included four demands Russia must agree to before he would lay down his arms to end the rebellion. In the letter, Kenesary insisted that Russia abandon the Aktau fort and destroy it. He further demanded that Russia “destroy all other establishments in steppe locations” in order to dismantle the Akmolinsk judicial tribunal (divan), and “free our imprisoned people.” In June 1841, Kenesary wrote to the chairman of the Orenburg Frontier Commission to explain the reasons for his continued hostility to Russian expansion in the steppe. He claimed that in 1825 Ivan Karnachev, with a force of three hundred Russians and one hundred sympathetic Kazakhs, attacked his brother Sarzhan’s aul. They “sacked the aul . . . [and] plundered an untold quantity of livestock and property, and slaughtered 64 people; the remainder saved themselves by flight.” He cited a number of different atrocities purportedly committed by Russians or Cossacks that demanded defensive, retaliatory acts by Kazakhs. Kenesary described the Russians as “leeches sucking the blood of the Kazakhs.”

Most observers at the time, as well as subsequent scholarly accounts, fault Kenesary for the continued internecine struggle in the Kazakh Steppe. Kenesary, according to these interpretations, made a political miscalculation that he could force clans hostile to his resistance to Russian colonization to join him and proclaim their allegiance to him. By 1845, Russia was fully committed to defeating Kenesary and restoring order to the steppe. The constant warfare resulted in lost warriors, lost livestock, and increased hostility among Kazakhs who refused to submit to Kenesary’s rule. Kenesary fled south—a tactic Kazakhs often used to escape Russian retaliation—eventually finding temporary sanctuary among the Kirghiz in Semirechie. The problem was, however, that Kokand was fighting Bukhara and attempting to assert control over Semirechie, where Kenesary was camped. The Kirghiz were fighting against Great Horde Kazakhs for the province, and Kenesary, weakened by the flight south, attempted to get the Great Horde Kazakhs to join his cause to resist Russia and oust the Kirghiz nomads from the lush Semirechie pastures. Kenesary started negotiating with the Kirghiz, to end the fight against the Kazakhs and Kokand, but at some point in the negotiations, the Kirghiz decided Kenesary was a liability and took him prisoner. Sometime in April 1847, the Kirghiz executed him, bringing to an ignoble close the last major Kazakh military resistance to Russian expansion into the Kazakh Steppe.

There will be other, relatively minor rebellions in the 1850s among some Great Horde clans resisting Russian expansion into Semirechie, but in 1854 the Russians took the region and established a permanent settlement at Vernyi (present-day Almaty). This opened the metaphorical door to Kokand, Khiva,
and Bukhara, but that push was temporarily delayed by the Crimean War (1853–1856) and the subsequent “great reforms” under the “tsar liberator” Alexander II (1855–1881). The greatest of the great reforms was the 1861 peasant emancipation, which liberated Russian peasants from the burdens of serfdom but not from the harsh realities of life in the empire. There were other reforms—judicial, military, and economic—but the reforms also, unintentionally, unleashed a wave of peasant migration to Siberia and the Kazakh Steppe that challenged the government’s ability to manage it, resulting in the further loss of Kazakh economic and social sovereignty.55

A consequence of this new attention was a wave of administrative reforms in Siberia and the Kazakh Steppe as well as a renewed imperial effort to conquer the Kokand, Bukhara, and Khiva. In 1867 cash-strapped Russia decided to abandon its colony in Alaska, selling it to the United States for the paltry sum of $7.2 million.56 Alaska clearly lay outside Russia’s imperial vision of itself. In 1864 Russian foreign minister Prince Alexander Gorchakov, issued what many scholars consider the government’s clearest justification for the empire’s continued expansion into central Asia. He explained for all “civilized States which are brought into contact with half-savage, nomad populations, possessing no fixed social organization . . . it always happens that the more civilized state is forced . . . to exercise a certain ascendency over those whom their turbulent and unsettled character make most undesirable neighbors.” He continued, using language that any ardent American expansionist might appreciate: that the “tribes on the frontier have to be reduced to a state of more or less perfect submission.” It was, he claimed, a “peculiarity of Asiatics to respect nothing but visible and palpable force; the moral force of reason and the interests of civilization has as yet no hold upon them.”57

**RESISTANCE: SIOUX**

Comparable to Kazakh resistance to Russian expansion and colonization, with its three major rebellions from 1824 to 1847, scholars tend to identify three major Sioux uprisings, or wars, following the so-called 1857 Spirit Lake Massacre. The first comes within five years of the tragedy at Spirit Lake—the 1862 Dakota War—followed by the 1866–1868 Powder River War (Red Cloud’s War) and the 1875–1877 Black Hills War (Sitting Bull’s War). These three conflicts represent the most serious clashes waged between the Sioux and Americans in the 1860s and 1870s, ending with the vast majority of Sioux forced to settle on government-approved reservations and the near complete loss of Sioux political and economic sovereignty. As with the Kazakh rebellions, the three major Sioux
conflicts are a series of battles, skirmishes, and raids that conflate into larger episodes that Americans describe as wars.

Following the 1825 Prairie du Chien treaty, the United States remained a relatively minor player in the northern plains. The south–north line of forts created a somewhat porous boundary that demarcated American territory; Americans expressed a desire to remove all Indians east of the line, which meant, essentially, all Indians east of the Mississippi River. The treaty established not just boundaries between the United States and western tribes but also boundaries between the tribes in the plains, in order to reduce intertribal warfare and stabilize the environment for the lucrative fur trade. By the 1820s, the Sioux—especially the Teton—benefited from westward migration; according to Colin G. Calloway, the strength of the Teton derived from their “ruthless exploitation of a favorable economic position and to reduction of enemy tribes by European diseases.”

In 1836 and again in 1837, the Yankton ceded lands to the United States, surrendering their claim to almost 2.2 million acres. Despite these significant cessions to the United States in the 1830s and 1840s, these decades witnessed years of continued Sioux territorial expansion. Different Sioux bands forged alliances with Arapahos and Cheyennes, secured the Black Hills from the Kiowa, and, as Richard White argued, the United States moved into a region in which the people did not consider themselves “wards,” were not some defenseless people but an overly confident and powerful people that was also expanding. This was partially a clash of nations and partially a clash of civilizations, but it was clearly a clash of expanding powers into a region that both claimed.

In the 1840s, Manifest Destiny became the dominant theme of American expansion westward, and the discovery of gold in California in 1849 accelerated that migration. Relations between the United States and the Sioux during those decades were generally peaceful, but the various peace initiatives of the previous decade began to crumble with the declining fur trade economy. Some Sioux bands, led by Mdewakanton and others in the Minnesota prairies and woodlands, became farmers and grew a variety of crops, such as potatoes and corn. They represented, as Gary Clayton Anderson noted, a Dakota subculture, but it was vulnerable to climate and crop failures. By the end of the 1840s, the
United States confronted a growing crisis on the plains that many Americans believed was necessary to resolve with treaties, removal, and reservations.

Many scholars agree that 1851 was a turning point in US-Sioux relations. The United States signed treaties with the Sioux at Traverse des Sioux in July, at Mendota in August, and at Fort Laramie in September. Representatives of the United States, including Superintendent of Indian Affairs David Mitchell and numerous Indian representatives, which the Americans insisted on identifying as chiefs and head chiefs, from the Sioux, Cheyennes, Crow, Arapahoes, Mandans, Arikaras, Assiniboines, and Gros Ventres negotiated and concluded a treaty near Fort Laramie in Wyoming. Certainly, the Americans wanted the treaty to reestablish peace between the Sioux and their allies with their neighbors in order to stabilize the northern plains and end intertribal conflict. From the American perspective, defined, specific tribal boundaries opened the door for additional American expansion. In the treaty, the United States also gained the right to construct roads and military posts across Indian lands. The tribes agreed not to harass emigrants that used the trails to California and Oregon. For agreeing to the terms, the various tribes expected to receive a substantial annual annuity and, more importantly, the right to hunt on unceded lands. In fact, between 1851 and 1858, the Sioux treaties extinguished their title to almost 28 million acres, which they exchanged for annual annuities and a reservation.

These 1851 treaties, as Jill St. Germain noted with subsequent treaties, demanded certain behavior by not just the bands but by all Sioux as individuals. In other words, the burdens to fulfill the treaty obligations had almost no consequence for an American emigrant or pioneer but imposed financial and administrative action on the US government and its representatives (agents and others). The consequence, however, was that if a single Sioux violated an article of the treaties, the American government reserved the right to withhold its obligations to the Sioux. The act of an individual meant that the United States could punish all Sioux people, which it did frequently. Article 8 of the Treaty of Fort Laramie stipulates that “United States may withhold the whole of a portion of the annuities mentioned . . . from the nation so offending, until, in the opinion of the President of the United States, proper satisfaction shall have been made.” In 1857 the Spirit Lake Massacre, sometimes called Inkipaduta’s War, refocused American attention on the Minnesota frontier (Minnesota was made a territory in 1849) and what becomes the Sioux problem.

It is difficult to call the Spirit Lake Massacre a rebellion, and even harder to consider it part of the larger Sioux Wars of the 1860s and 1870s. Nonetheless, it was an act of resistance and, more importantly, a signal many Americans
interpreted to suggest that the frontier remained a dangerous place that needed final subjugation to complete American control. The only way to do that was to commit military force and either compel the Sioux onto reservations or exterminate them. The United States did not control the frontier. The settlements where the attacks occurred were located on the border between northern Iowa and southern Minnesota, found on the “extreme frontier . . . although on ceded lands, were really in the very heart of the Indian country, and absolutely unprotected and defenseless.”66 The winter of 1856–1857 was a severe one, and the annuities failed to alleviate Sioux suffering in the region. Many Sioux were forced to beg, and someone in Inkpadata’s camp killed a settler’s dog (which had bitten one of them), prompting a confrontation with some Americans. Shortly thereafter, Inkpadata’s group attacked and killed thirty-four settlers, moved to the settlement of Springfield near Spirit Lake, and attacked the settlers who were prepared and had found refuge in an impromptu fortification. The attacks killed some settlers and others were taken prisoner, and they caused a panic throughout the territory. The crisis ended almost as quickly as it started. Inkpadata and his followers fled west, although the Americans captured some of them. The government repeatedly failed to capture the notorious Inkpadata.67

Many scholars, however, argue that the failure to punish Inkpadata emboldened the Sioux to resist American colonization, but, as Roy W. Meyer writes, it also meant that “hostility towards the Indians increased enormously . . . [and] the danger of a real uprising was intensified because of a shift in the attitudes of both whites and Indians.”68 Five years later, Minnesota erupted again in senseless violence. In August 1862, in the midst of the Civil War, four young Santee murdered five settlers near Acton, Minnesota. It was an arbitrary act of violence that sparked a larger, more violent clash between the Sioux struggling to survive on the reservations and settlers who both feared and distrusted them.69

One thing that appears repeatedly in many of the recollections, memoirs, and reports published over the years about the conflict was the clearly expressed fear among many Sioux that the Americans held the entire tribe responsible for the violent acts committed by four young men—that, once the murders occurred, many Sioux leaders reluctantly agreed to join the hostiles rather than try to prove their innocence. The Minnesota Sioux rightfully feared American retribution, and that the American government held all Sioux in the state accountable. It happened before, and many treaties signed between the United States and the Sioux apparently enshrined the very concept.70 Equally fascinating, of course, was that, during the uprising, a large number of Sioux defended whites against violence, saved their lives, and literally put themselves between white men, women, and children and those who wanted to kill them. There were deep
divisions among the Sioux about this conflict, which the conflict manifested and amplified and further fractured the bands.

Roughly two thousand Sioux surrendered to the Americans, but hundreds of others, including Little Crow, fled to the plains. Sibley placed some 400 Sioux on trial for various crimes, including murder and rape, and the government convicted and sentenced to hang 393 of them. The state’s newspapers fueled the desire to exterminate or expel all Sioux from the state. “The cruelties perpetrated by the Sioux nation in the last two weeks,” one editor wrote, “demand that our government shall treat them for all time as outlaws who have forfeited all rights to property and life.” Of course, the failure to conduct proper investigations and hold legitimate trials to determine guilt or innocence, followed by the merciless decision to execute over three hundred Sioux deemed guilty by the military tribunal, smacks more of vengeance than justice. President Abraham Lincoln’s intervention saved the lives of most, but the military tribunal still bore the mark of retribution and not jurisdictive integrity. In December 1862, the Justice Department reversed the tribunal’s conviction and subsequently hanged 39 Sioux. For the Sioux, according to Angela Cavender Wilson, the Minnesota-Sioux conflict became “a pivotal point around which many stories within the oral tradition are referenced. Not just because this was a traumatic period in Dakota history, but because this is the event which marks the separation from the homeland.”

Between 1862 and 1866, the United States engaged in a number of small battles with the Sioux throughout the Dakota, Wyoming, Nebraska, and Montana Territories. The Sioux and their allies continued to harass and attack travelers along the Bozeman Trail, which led to the Montana goldfields, and kept the army on constant alert. In October 1865, the United States signed treaties with several different Sioux bands at Fort Sully, including the Miniconjou, Lower Brulé, Two Kettle, Blackfeet, Sans Arcs, Hunkpapa, Yanktonai, Upper Yanktonai, and Oglala. The treaties demanded an end to the hostilities and reasserted the US right to construct roads and defend travelers. In June 1866, Col. Henry Carrington met with several Sioux leaders at Fort Laramie to negotiate an end to the crisis, but the Sioux refused to surrender the Powder River region to American forts.

In 1866 the United States built three forts along the trail, ostensibly to protect travelers from Indian depredations. From the American perspective, the articles of the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty clearly permitted these forts. Several Sioux bands in the Powder River region disagreed. In December 1866, one of the notable defeats for the United States occurred when a young lieutenant—William Fetterman—inadvertently led a force of eighty men into a skillfully
executed ambush near Fort Phil Kearny. The Sioux killed Fetterman and all his men. "We must," insisted Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, "act with vindictive earnestness against the Sioux." 74

Frustrated by the crisis in the northern plains, the United States, in July 1867, created the Indian Peace Commission, charged by the government to return peace and stability to the region. It consisted of civilians and military men. The commission traveled west to meet with the Sioux to resolve the conflict; they did this eleven times. Typically absent from these meetings, however, were two of the more influential Sioux leaders—Red Cloud and Sitting Bull—both of whom refused to meet with the commissioners. Red Cloud made specific demands—namely, that the United States completely abandon the three forts along the Bozeman Trail and remove all whites from the territory. Only then, Red Cloud made clear, would he meet with the government’s representatives. His insistence that the United States abandon the forts strongly echoed similar demands made by Zholaman and Kenesary during the Kazakh rebellions. Unlike the situation in the Kazakh Steppe, however, the United States ultimately agreed to abandon the posts.

Ultimately, the negotiations resulted in the signing of the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie. It conceded significant swaths of territory to the Sioux and the Americans agreed to abandon the forts, but it also acknowledged the Black Hills were located on Sioux land; tragically, the government surrendered land to the Sioux that was already reserved for the Ponca. 75 It was a flawed treaty. If the commissioners’ goal was to establish a durable peace with the Sioux, this treaty failed miserably. Although Red Cloud never again went to war against the United States, the treaty’s provisions were dependent upon the United States fulfilling its obligations explicitly. It did not. That failure, and continued American expansion, pushed the United States and the Sioux toward another military confrontation.

The United States forced many Sioux onto the Great Sioux Reservation, but it quickly became clear that the Sioux interpreted the provisions differently. 76 As a case in point, the Sioux established peace with the United States, but that had no bearing on their relations with other tribes and the intertribal warfare on the northern plains continued much as before. 77 Moreover, pioneers, eager to take advantage of the Homestead Act, continued to pour into the Dakotas, Nebraska, and, to a lesser extent, Montana. The perception of conflict between pioneers and the Sioux kept the American government on edge. Having completed the first transcontinental railway in 1869, a new northern route conceived of a different westbound line that cut through northern Dakota Territory, which required further negotiation with the Sioux to permit its construction. Various
Sioux bands continued to live by the chase and had occasional skirmishes with American soldiers or emigrants, but in 1872–1873, these encounters increased significantly. Sioux often attacked surveying teams of the Northern Pacific Railroad—Jay Cooke’s Gamble—planned to go from Duluth, Minnesota, to Seattle, Washington.78

Of all the conflicts between the United States and the Sioux in the nineteenth century, none received even close to the same amount of attention from scholars, commentators, or casual observers, as the 1876 conflict. The immediate source of the conflict erupted in 1874, after the US government dispatched an expedition, led by Lt. Col. George Custer, to investigate rumors of gold in the Black Hills, although that was not the mission’s explicitly stated purpose. Miners and others frequently violated the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty and moved into the region well before Custer’s expedition. The American government made half-hearted efforts to remove them, but the expedition itself spent almost two months in the Black Hills. Unable, or unwilling, to control its own citizens, who daily violated the treaty’s provisions, the United States reached the conclusion that it was necessary to “violate the treaty in order to restore it.”79 By late 1875, more than fifteen thousand miners and others had rushed to the Black Hills to exploit its natural resources.80 In the end, however, a treaty that American officials pledged would last forever barely lasted six years.

Unlike previous conflicts between the American and the Sioux, in which fault could be attributed to each side, possibly with varying degree of responsibility, the Great Sioux War of 1876 was initiated by the United States for naked conquest and differed not a whit from the British in Africa, the French in Algeria, or the Russians in the Kazakh Steppe. It was the clearest evidence that the United States exercised imperial ambitions that mirrored other nineteenth-century powers. As Ostler observed, President Ulysses S. Grant faced a difficult choice—expansion or honor—and in this situation, he “sacrificed the latter.”81 In late 1875, the American government ordered all Plains’ tribes to return to the reservations. In December of that year, Secretary of the Interior Zachariah Chandler ordered the Sioux to return to the reservations by the end of January 1876 or accept the label “hostile.” If they failed to return, the government determined to use military force to compel compliance. Despite the enormous victory at the Battle of the Little Bighorn, several Sioux and Cheyenne bands, throughout the fall and winter of 1876–1877, migrated toward various reservations to surrender. The army kept the pressure on the Sioux, and in May 1877, Crazy Horse and his followers surrendered at Red Cloud Agency. The war ended, as Jerome A. Greene noted, with a “whimper.” The United States achieved the specific goal of forcing the Sioux onto selected reservations and abandoning their
nomadic, buffalo-hunting economic lifeways and opening territory to pioneer settlement.82 The Sioux Wars were essentially over. The United States militarily and politically subjugated the Sioux. Internal colonization in both the United States and Russia began in earnest.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Sioux and the Kazakhs opposed different colonizing agendas and policies, but they exhibited similar martial reactions. They each fought against the loss of land and their political sovereignty. In short, specific Sioux and Kazakh conflicts are not the key to this comparison. They were each peculiar to the imperial environment as it existed in the plains and steppe. There was little in common between Red Cloud’s War in the northern plains and Kenesary Kasymov’s Rebellion in the Kazakh Steppe that this comparison exposes, except that American and Russian expansions triggered the martial reactions with obvious conclusions. Red Cloud and Kenesary resisted the expansions. The conflicts reveal, however, in both cases that indigenous peoples vigorously resisted; but comparing the course of the conflicts does not illuminate as much as comparing the reasons behind the conflicts and, more importantly, the consequences. The United States and Russia determined to settle the nomads and allot the land, effectively ending, or severely restricting, the Sioux and Kazakh nomadic existence.

The benefit of this comparison is that examining motivations to resist through the comparative prism demonstrates that the United States engaged in an expansionist agenda that differed little from the Russian experience. The conflicts produced an overwhelming response and use of force to localized affairs but was clearly motivated by a desire to complete the colonization of land arguably controlled by a native people. These conflicts were rebellions, and they represented military resistance by a people whose political sovereignty the colonizers already determined lacked national unity or national integrity to treat as equals. In that sense, the American expansion west was not a unique colonizing exercise.

The ultimate failure of the martial resistance by the Sioux and the Kazakhs to prevent American and Russian expansion into the plains and the steppe did not mean that all resistance ceased. Resistance took different forms as the Sioux and the Kazakhs continued to resist cultural and social pressures to change and, to the extent possible, maintain their fractured identities into the early twentieth century. What is interesting in this difference of chronological resistance is that Kazakh opposition to Russian expansion began well before Kazakhs experienced intensified Russian settler colonialism, before the massive influx of Russian peasants settling on land designated for Kazakh use in the second half of the nineteenth century. Kazakh hostility seemingly anticipated this settler-colonial expansion, but the conflicts were a twofold reaction to Cossacks settling along
the Irtyshev Line. The Russian prohibition against Kazakhs migrating to pastures on the Inner Side fully exacerbated Kazakh internal political strife, represented by Abulkhair’s 1732 oath and other Kazakh khans and sultans fighting each other for political and economic dominance in the Kazakh Steppe. Sioux resistance, on the other hand, occurred most vigorously after 1851, after treaties signed between some Sioux bands ceded territory to the United States. It was after 1851, and clearly after the American Civil War (although the 1862 Minnesota Uprising was a significant exception), that American expansion and colonization on the northern plains intensified and sparked much broader, more passionate hostility by the Sioux. There was internal disagreement among the Sioux, as well, about how to respond, but it did not result, as it did among the Kazakhs, in an internecine conflict.

For comparison, the construction of the Ilek Line corresponds to the Bozeman Trail forts that Red Cloud and other Sioux opposed so vigorously in the 1860s. The physical presence of the Russians in the steppe—and, later, the Americans in the plains—meant that the visible and tangible reminder these forts represented added considerable anxiety and hostility to American and Russian colonization. That issue, certainly more than whether or not the Americans or the Russians recognized a head chief or a khan, fueled the rebellions. Sioux and Kazakh economic decline was associated with—and, in part, a product of—American and Russian expansion. Consequently, the Sioux and the Kazakhs responded with martial force. One difference, of course, was the duration of the rebellions against American and Russian colonization; but both the United States and Russia determined to crush the military capability of the Sioux and the Kazakhs and make the northern plains and the Kazakh steppe secure for trade and settlement.

The conquest of the Sioux and the Kazakhs was both a military and economic process. As the Americans slowly squeezed the Sioux by territorial limitations, the Sioux also suffered from the loss of the main economic necessity that sustained them in the northern plains: the buffalo. In the Kazakh Steppe, severe winters and the absence of available pasture also diminished Kazakh economic power, and, subsequently, in both cases, the loss of economic autonomy resulted in the ability to resist American and Russian expansion. Without the buffalo, the Sioux needed other sources for food—something the Americans offered but only on reservations, where the American government assumed it was easier to control them. Without pastures, Kazakh livestock suffered, and only by agreeing to Russian demands that restricted migration patterns could the Kazakhs receive the assistance Russia offered. Although confined to districts rather than reservations, the Russians believed they could better control
the Kazakhs by imposing territorial limitations. In both cases, restricting movement compelled the Sioux and the Kazakhs into a dependency on the American and Russian governments that completely eroded their political and economic independence.

Here the comparison shares some similarities with the US-Sioux case, but there were differences as well. For example, the Americans and the Russians both stressed the need to identify individuals who could be held accountable, and that were possibly already acknowledged by other Sioux and Kazakhs as chiefs or khans. The problem was that, in principle, these positions in Sioux and Kazakh society were not specifically hereditary titles but rather based on a more culturally ambiguous recognition of the individual's personal skills, courage, wealth, and prestige. This does not mean that hereditary transfers of power from father to son did not occur; instead, Sioux and Kazakh society was fluid enough to allow Sioux or Kazakhs to select their leaders based upon this other criteria. The title was essentially meaningless without followers, but during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the United States and tsarist Russia acknowledged men designated as chief or khan by the colonizer in order to advance expansion. Two such examples were securing Little Crow's signature on an 1805 treaty and Abulkhair's 1732 oath. Both the United States and Russia also employed a couple of common colonizer tactics in the quest to expand. They awarded titles, selected leaders, granted benefits, and attempted to marginalize chiefs or khans who did not acknowledge the colonizer's right to create what Robert K. Thomas called "cooperative marginal people," leaders elevated by the colonizer in order to subvert recognized indigenous authority or leadership.83 According to Utley, this practice created a "chaos of authority" that plagued American-Sioux relations in the second half of the nineteenth century.84 "From the outset," Ostler argued, "as the United States tried to established control over the Plains Sioux, the government's relationship with Sioux leaders was structured by a basic contradiction... officials were dependent on native leaders, at times going so far as to declare particular leaders 'head chief' of the Sioux nation or one of its subdivisions. On the other hand, the government's goal of assimilation called for the eventual destruction of native political organization."85 In both cases the United States and Russia destabilized Sioux and Kazakh sociopolitical structures in order to diminish or tear down leaders opposed to expansion and colonization. Therefore, American and Russian government officials typically perceived internal power struggles as evidence of backwardness or traditionalists opposing American or Russian civilization; it was evidence of the cultural, social, and political inferiority of native structures.
Aleksei I. Levshin summarized Russian frustration when he wrote in 1832,

For over 90 years they [the Kazaks] have been under Russia’s authority, and for 90 years the government has tried to establish amongst them some sort of order, but only now are we starting to see the beginning of success. The reprimands, labor, expenses to establish trading centers, schools and mosques; the construction of homes for some sultans to accustom them to a sedentary life; the creation of the council of khans, tribal jurisdictions and frontier courts, providing salaries for khans and clan officials; supporting the costs of the mullahs and secretaries; permitting them to winter beyond the empire’s frontier—all has been in vain. These measures have not advanced the Kirgiz-Kazakhs toward civilization [obrazovanie].

Critics of Indian policies echoed this sense of futility in the United States during the 1860s and 1870s, at the height of the Sioux Wars. The fact that Levshin traveled through the Kazakh Steppe during the rebellions in the Little and Middle Hordes characterized his sense that only by imposing a firm order, a powerful military presence, would the Kazaks be compelled to behave in a manner that advanced Russia’s civilizing mission in Asia.

In the United States, similar comments punctuated the concerns of the government, the military, reformers, and observers of American policy. One difference, however, appeared in an 1867 report submitted to Congress that, just as an example, identified failures by the US government to fulfill its treaty obligations and explained the rebellions. In 1972 William Welsh (of the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church) repeated the charge against the government. Certainly, Helen Hunt Jackson, in her classic monograph, A Century of Dishonor, convicted the United States for its failures, which sparked a new round of reform efforts. In each case—and there are numerous other examples that can be cited—Americans were far more willing to criticize US government policies for the rebellions than Russian observers experiencing similar difficulties in the Kazakh Steppe. In a sense, Jackson and Welsh almost proclaimed that the Sioux were justified (there are just as many observers unwilling to agree with those interpretations), something Russians were unable to concede until the 1890s, when the evidence of impoverishment and utter economic dislocation among the Kazaks was readily apparent. Only then did some—a small minority to be sure—Russians demand reforms.

What this also suggests is that Americans and Russians typically blurred and linked perceptions and policies during the military conquest of the Sioux and the Kazakhs. American and Russian perceptions also linked the Sioux and Kazakhs to a general imperial expansion—particularly, negative attitudes about Sioux
and Kazakh society, culture, and behavior. Perceptions, positive and negative, based typically on clichés, stereotypes, and misunderstanding Sioux and Kazakh sociopolitical and economic structures, animated policies that the Americans and Russians designed to deal with these powerful, seminomadic peoples. It is to perceptions of the Sioux and the Kazakhs that this work will now turn.

**NOTES**

1. Of course, Americans started moving west before independence, but the discovery of gold in California started a stampede westward; and so, in the 1840s, the United States either fought a war (Mexico) or negotiated a treaty (Britain) that fixed its northern and southern boundaries. While California—or even Texas before the 1840s—might have experienced an influx of Americans, it was only after the boundaries were fixed that the United States and the Sioux started to have a real problem with each other. In Russia, as late as 1864, the government was using the absence of fixed boundaries to justify expansion, and it was only after defeating the Turkmen at Geok Tepe in 1881 that the British determined to use diplomacy to stop Russian expansion.

2. In a sense, what Russia did not have was a powerful imperial rival that opposed Russian expansion into the Kazakh Steppe. British India was a long way away and none too eager to expand territorially into central Asia; the British wanted to dominate trade, not territory. It is conceivable, in an imperialist way of thinking, that had Britain completely abandoned North America after 1783 that the United States would have expanded into Canada without, as in the Russian case, an imperial rival to hinder the movement. The fact that, after 1783, Britain and the United States shared a border was not a condition that Russia faced until the 1870s, when its border with China was fully demarcated. In the 1890s, Britain and Russia finally formalized a recognized border for the Russian Empire, but they surveyed the borders in such a way that Persia and Afghanistan remained as neutral, relatively independent buffers—meaning the British and Russian Empires never shared a border.

3. At first glance, the possible reason might be Islamic prohibitions against its consumption and, therefore, Kazakhs did not drink, but that might be only a part of the answer. For this comparison, however, it is more important simply to identify the exploitation of spirits rather than explore fully why. Answering why is an exercise in speculation due to the lack of evidence from the Russian-Kazakh case.


5. Referring to them as "small skirmishes" is not meant in any way to diminish the suffering and the terrible loss of life both Kazakhs and Russians experienced because of these rebellions. Russian government reports and the testimony by both Russians and Kazakhs are filled with accounts of fifty killed here or one hundred killed there. It is fair to say that more Kazakhs and Russians died in these rebellions than Sioux or Americans died during the Sioux Wars of the 1860s and 1870s. The difference, in that sense, is that Russians and Kazakhs did not give dramatic names to these battles. Thus, there is no Spirit Lake Massacre or Custer's Last Stand to mark these occasions.


14. This, according to Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., “indicates as much about Congress’s conception of native sovereignty as its fear of native warfare.” *The White Man’s Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 146.

15. Berkhofer, *White Man’s Indian*, 141. Berkhofer noted, as well, that the addition to create equal territories that could become states potentially complicated American-Indian relations because it “added new voices in Congress for native cessions and war” (148).


19. During the nineteenth century, several Mdewakanton leaders used the name Little Crow. Gary Clayton Anderson writes that the Little Crow who signed the treaty with Pike was Cetanwakamani, a leader who brought the Little Crow “dynasty to prominence.” *Little Crow: Spokesman for the Sioux* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1986), 15. Doane


24. US Department of War, Indian Treaties, and Laws and Regulations Relating to Indian Affairs: To which is Added an Appendix, Containing the Proceedings of the Old Congress, and Other Important State Papers, in Relation to Indian Affairs (Washington City: Way & Gideon, 1826), 276–82.


28. In 1837 a trader and his half-blood Sioux wife—John Baptiste Ferribault and Pelagie Ferribault—claimed that in August 1820, the Sioux made a grant of land—chiefly an island at the rivers’ confluence, called Pike’s Island—that belonged to her and “her heirs forever.” Lawrence Taliaferro, Indian agent at St. Peter’s, vigorously disputed the claim, noting that he instructed Colonel Leavenworth that the island was more useful as a military reserve. Several Sioux chiefs were summoned to Fort Snelling in 1838, as witnesses to the transfer in 1820, but as Bad Hail told the government officials, “we did not give away any land, only the privilege to cut wood.” This is a case of who had the right to purchase or receive land from Indians. As the commanding officer at Fort Snelling noted in an 1838 opinion, “that, if the Government sanction the practice of the Indians giving their land to individuals, much of the public domain now in the Indian country will be proved to belong to aliens and other transient persons who may pass through Indian country.” See “Purchase of Island—Confluence of the St. Peter’s and Mississippi Rivers,” 26th Cong., 1st sess., House Executive Document 82 (Washington, DC, 1840).


31. Utley, Indian Frontier, 35.


37. Semirechie, also known in Kazakh as Zhety Su, or “Land of the Seven Rivers,” was the southeastern province, bordering China, Kokand, and Bukhara.
38. Another element to the rebellions that complicated relations between Russians and Kazakhs, and between Kazakhs in the three hordes, was the expansionist pressure applied by Kokand, Khiva, and Bukhara to control Kazakh territory in the southern Kazakh Steppe. Moreover, Great Britain was disturbed by Russia’s expansion into the Kazakh Steppe and feared that Russia’s ultimate imperial goal was to keep on going all the way to India. The rebellions in the Kazakh Steppe were only one conflict of many that Russia was fighting. Russia was expanding and fighting in the Caucasus, fought a couple of wars against Persia in the 1810s and 1820s, fought against Ottoman Turkey in the 1820s and 1830s, and was faced with a serious Polish rebellion in 1830. In addition, the British had intelligence, which was clearly in the minds of Delhi’s colonial officials, that suggested that Russia was encouraging Afghanistan’s ruler to ally with Russia against Britain in India. The “Great Game,” as it was called, was part of the “Eastern Question” and the geopolitical backdrop to Russia’s expansion, but it pitted the Turkestan khanates against two imperial powers, Russia and Britain. See Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: The Struggle for Empire in Central Asia* (New York: Kodansha International, 1992). The two Anglo-Afghan Wars (1839–1841, 1879–1881) were triggered by Britain’s desire to replace seemingly hostile Afghan rulers with a ruler that Delhi could manipulate or, at a minimum, be trusted to block Russian expansion. Both wars ended badly for Britain.
40. TsGA RK, f. 4, op. 1, d. 1820, ll. 720–721; *Materialy po istorii Kazakhskoi SSR (1775–1828)* (Moscow: Akademiia nauk SSSR, 1940), 449.
41. TsGA RK, f. 4, op. 1, d. 1036, l. 141.
44. TsGA RK, f. 64, op. 1, d. 5, l. 16.
45. TsGA RK, f. 64, op. 1, d. 5, l. 35.
46. TsGA RK, f. 64, op. 1, d. 13, ll. 158–59.
50. TsGA RK, f. 374, op. 1, d. 25, ll. 15–16.
51. TsGA RK, f. 4, op. 1, d. 1996, ll. 3–6. The original was written in the Arabic script commonly used by Kazakhs. It was reprinted in Cyrillic Kazakh in M. K. Kozbaev,

52. TsGA RK, f. 4, op. 1, d. 2622, 1845g., l. 1059.


55. The Russian and, later, Soviet governments continued to struggle with peasant migration well into the twentieth century. As Lewis H. Siegelbaum and Leslie Page Moch explained, “Each iteration of state power—the tsarist, Soviet, and post-Soviet—engendered a variety of migration regimes, that is, policies, practices, and infrastructure designed to both foster and limit human movement.” Broad Is My Native Land: Repertoires and Regimes of Migration in Russia’s Twentieth Century (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 3, emphasis in original.


60. White, “Winning of the West”.

61. Anderson, Kinsmen of Another Kind, 144.


64. St. Germain, Broken Treaties, 73.

65. Kappler, Indian Affairs, 2:595.


68. Ibid., 101. Thomas Hughes wrote that these “considerations had great weight with Little Crow and his followers, five years later, in deciding on the second and greater massacre.”

69. More than a decade before, a missionary wrote a report in which the sentiment revealed the strong possibility that a conflict was already in the making. Referring to the Santee Sioux as the “wild Dakota,” the author wrote, “Though there are four stations on the Minnesota River and two on the Mississippi below St. Paul, the prospects of the Dakota mission are not bright. The male portion of the nation with but few exceptions, [has] an inverteret hatred of the Christian religion, and look upon the missionaries as intruders who drink their water and plough their soil, but give nothing in return.” See “Miscellaneous: Mission to the Dakotas,” Christian Observer (September 7, 1850), 144. One history, written almost a century after the conflict, concluded that government maladministration, bad weather and crop failures, alcohol, “fraudulent treaties, insolent traders, swindling fur companies, and dishonest agents” caused the “rebellion.” The author also concluded that it needed Sioux leaders, such as Shakopee and Little Crow, who were willing to sacrifice everything and commit the atrocities. See C. M. Oehler, The Great Sioux Uprising (1959; New York: Da Capo, 1997), 236–37. Oehler’s explanation for the causes differ little from the first book to appear about the conflict—interestingly, in 1863—although that author, Isaac V.D. Heard, also claimed that the Sioux (and all Indians) had a predisposition to violence. See Isaac V.D. Heard, History of the Sioux War and Massacres of 1862 and 1863 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 31–51. In retaliation for the 1862 conflict, the Sioux were forced to leave Minnesota. Sibley and his militia made certain that the Sioux were expelled. Throughout 1863 Sibley remained active and did not disband his militia but increased its size and marched north to the Minnesota-Dakota Territory border. Several other skirmishes occurred—first at Big Mound and later near Dead Buffalo Lake. While these engagements were relatively minor affairs, they increased hostile tensions across the northern plains. The US War Department created the Department of the Northwest, under Maj. Gen. John Pope, to subdue the Sioux and force them to retreat westward into Dakota Territory. Another battle, near Killdeer Mountain, in July 1863, revealed the government’s intent with this overwhelming military force. The goal was to inflict significant hardship on the Sioux by destroying their food, capturing other supplies, and forcing them, as one historian noted, to “submit to the largesse of the U.S. government.” See Bill Yenne, Indian Wars: The Campaign for the American West (Yardley, PA: Westholme, 2008), 103.


73. All of the treaties are reprinted in Kappler, Indian Affairs, 2:883–908.

74. Quoted in Utley, Indian Frontier, 106.

75. According to Joe Starita, “The Lakota had not asked for the Ponca land, didn’t need or want it. But what the government later characterized as ‘a blunder’ now gave the Lakota legal incentive to go after the smaller, weaker, peaceful tribe. So, for eight years, Lakota war parties, mostly Brule, terrorized the besieged Ponca in their villages, destroying their crops, stealing their horses, slaughtering their livestock, killing and scalping the people whenever they could.” “I am a Man”: Chief Standing Bear’s Journey for Justice (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 2008), 34.


80. Howard R. Lamar, Dakota Territory, 1861–1889: A Study of Frontier Politics (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1956), 150. It was not just gold that attracted outsiders but other natural resources, especially timber.


84. Utley, Indian Frontier, 228–30.


86. In the 1832 publication of Levshin’s book, Opisanie Kirgiz-kazachi’kh, ili Kirgiz-kaisatskikh, ord i stepi, he used the word obrazovanie, which usually translates as “education,” but not what one simply learns in school. It can mean a cultured, civil, knowledgeable person. In the French translation of his book, Description des hordes et des Steppes des Kirghiz-Kazaks ou Kirghiz-Kaïssaks, the word used was civilisation. What this illustrates for this comparison is that the ideas, sentiments, and process are essential. Simply because Russians might not have used words such as savage, barbarian, or some other pejorative to describe the Kazakhs does not mean that the same sentiment or attitude was absent. The key is to detect that sentiment rather than identify a specific word. See Aleksei I. Levshin, Opisanie Kirgiz-kazachi’kh, ili Kirgiz-kaisatskikh, ord i stepi (1832; Almaty: Sanat, 1996), 372; Alexis de Levchine, Description des hordes et des Steppes des Kirghiz-Kazaks ou Kirghiz-Kaïssaks (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1840), 403.


88. According to Helen Hunt Jackson, “Had the provisions of these first treaties been fairly and promptly carried out, there would have been living to-day among the citizens of Minnesota thousands of Sioux families, good and prosperous farmers and mechanics, whose civilization would have dated back to the treaty of Prairie du Chien.” Russian officials rarely express a similar sentiment before the 1890s. A Century of Dishonor: A Sketch of the United States Government’s Dealing with Some of the Indian Tribes (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1881), 143.