

Apsáalooke Historical Timeline

1400. The ancestral tribe of the Apsáalooke and the Hidatsa were living the "Land of Forests and many lakes" (the present upper Great Lakes of Canada and the United States).

1450. Two leaders of this group, No Intestines and Red Scout, fasted at Holy Lake (present day Devils Lake, North Dakota). Red Scout received a vision indicating that his people would survive through the spiritual graces of Sacred Tobacco. Red Scout and his people settled on the Missouri and learned horticulture from the Mandan, eventually becoming the contemporary Hidatsas. No Intestines and his followers traveled on an extensive migration in search of the Sacred Tobacco. The trek eventually led them to their historic homeland, present-day southeastern Montana and northern Wyoming. This group became known as the Ashalahó/Many Lodges or the historic Mountain Crow.

1490. The Apsáalooke are firmly established in their homeland, displacing the Shoshones and allying themselves with the resident Kiowas.

1500. During or shortly after the migration of the Apsáalooke, a band formed called the Bilápiiutche/Beaver Dries Its Fur. No one knows for certain what became of this group, but many Apsáalooke and Kiowas believe that they went to the Southern Plains with the Kiowa in the 1500s and eventually became assimilated into that tribe.

1600. The next band of the Apsáalooke developed out of a separation from the Hidatsa. Sometime after No Intestines group had become established on the Plains and argument arose between two factions in the Hidatsa villages on the Missouri River. The quarrel was over the distribution of a drowned buffalo, the wife of the leader Bad Heart Bear felt that she had not received enough of the tripe. The ensuing dispute led to a permanent separation when the followers of Bad Heart Bear joined the Ashalahó Apsáalooke on the Plains. This group became known as the Binnéassippeele/Those Who Live Amongst The River Banks, or the historic River Crow.

1700. The Apsáalooke acquired their first horses from a Shoshone camp near the Great Salt Lake.

1743. A group of Apsáalooke camped at the confluence of the Bighorn and Little Bighorn Rivers meet with the La Vérendrye Brothers, French-Canadian traders. Most likely the first encounter between the Apsáalooke and the Europeans.

1805. Lewis and Clark Expedition travels across Apsáalooke territory. On their return trip in 1806, the remuda of horses meant for Clark, being held by his sergeant, Nathaniel Pryor, are taken by Apsáalooke warriors near present-day Huntley, Montana.

1825. The first treaty between the Apsáalooke and the United States is signed by Apsáalooke leader Long Hair and Major O'Fallon of the United States. The other prominent Apsáalooke leader Sore Belly refuses to sign.

1840. The Apsáalooke are afflicted with the first of three severe smallpox epidemics that reduced the tribe from an estimated 10,000 in the 1830s to approximately 2,000 by 1850.

1851. The Apsáalooke participated in the first Ft. Laramie Treaty. The treaty stated that the Apsáalooke controlled over 33 million acres of land in present-day Montana and Wyoming.

1864. The outnumbered Apsáalooke successfully defended themselves against the combined forces of the Lakota, Cheyenne and Arapaho on East Pryor Creek north of present-day Pryor, Montana. The largest and most dramatic battle to protect eastern Apsáalooke lands from the Lakota invasion of the 1860s.

1865. The Apsáalooke assisted the United States military in protecting travelers on the Bozeman Trail. To this end, three forts were established in Apsáalooke territory.

1868. The Apsáalooke participated in the second Ft. Laramie Treaty, and their land holdings were reduced to 8 million acres in present-day Montana.

1869. The first government agency is established for the Apsáalooke on Hide Scraper Creek (present-day Mission Creek, Montana). This is the first exposure of the Apsáalooke to the reservation policies of the United States.

1872. Apsáalooke land holdings are reduced again and the government agency is moved to present-day Absarokee, Montana.

1876. The Apsáalooke continued to support the United States military by supplying the scouts to the columns of the Centennial Campaign. If it were not for the assistance of the Apsáalooke to General Crooks Wyoming Column on June 17 at Rosebud Creek, he and his men would have met the same fate as General Custer's command did eight years later.

1877. The Apsáalooke maintain constant attacks against the invading Lakota, Cheyenne and Arapaho, with and without the assistance of the United States military. Even pursuing the fleeing Lakotas into Canada.

1881. Sitting Bull and his followers surrender at Ft. Buford, North Dakota after being in Canada for four years. Sitting Bull stated that one of the reasons for his surrender was to seek protection from the almost constant harassment of Apsáalooke warriors.

1882. The Apsáalooke agreed to another land cession and the government agency is moved to its present site at Crow Agency, Montana.

1887. An Apsáalooke war leader named Wraps His Tail lead an unsuccessful insurgency against the United States government because of newly imposed laws restricting the Apsáalooke to their reservation and preventing them from engaging in inter-tribal warfare. Wraps His Tail was killed and a number of his followers imprisoned. One cavalryman was killed in the skirmish and is interred in the Custer National Cemetery at Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument.

1888. Against possible imprisonment and/or death, the Apsáalooke leader Two Leggings leads a counter attack against a Lakota raiding party from the Ft. Peck Reservation. He and his group overtook the Lakota horse raiders, killing one of them and reclaimed their horses. Historians believe this to be the last inter-tribal conflict to occur on the Northern Plains.

1903. Annual Crow Fair established.

1904. Cessation of "ceded strip" reduces the reservation to present size, 2.2 million acres.

1920. Crow Allotment Act passed into law.

1921. Chief Plenty Coups, the last traditional leader of the Apsáalooke Nation, represented all Native Americans at the dedication of the "Tomb of the Unknown Soldier" at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

1924. Apsáalooke who are not already citizens are granted citizenship and right to vote under the Indian Citizenship Act.

1926. Crow Act of 1920 amended, authorized leasing of allotted lands for many purposes, including grazing, farming and mineral leases.

1934. Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) ends allotment and assimilation policies.

1934. Crow Tribe opposes IRA due to BIA control clause.

1948. First Crow Tribal constitution.

1961. Court of Claims awarded 10 million dollars to Apsáalooke Nation for land taken by the Federal Government.

1968. Crow Mineral Act signed by President Johnson.

1975. Crow Tribe sues to invalidate coal mining leases on reservation.

1983. Apsáalooke win inherent sovereignty case in Supreme Court.

1987. Supreme Court decision awards Apsáalooke millions in Crow Coal Severance Tax Case against the State of Montana.

1987. Crow Tribe filed dereliction and breach of trust responsibility suit against the U. S. Government regarding Section 2 of the Crow Allotment Act of 1920.

2002. New Tribal Constitution passed.