



Maza's Protected His Village

U.S.-Dakota War of 1862

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| August 18, 1862 | War begins at the Redwood (Lower Sioux) Agency, led by Taoyateduta (Little Crow). |
| August 19–25 | Attacks on New Ulm and Fort Ridgely; New Ulm is evacuated. Sibley is appointed to command troops and scouts. |
| September 1–2 | Battle of Birch Coulee. |
| September 23 | Battle of Wood Lake. |
| September 26 | Captives are released and some of the Dakota who had been fighting surrender at Camp Release. |
| September 28 | Military trials begin for Dakota who had fought. |
| October 24 | Sibley moves his camp, along with all Dakota prisoners, from Camp Release to the Redwood Agency. |
| November 4 | Trials end; 303 Dakota are sentenced to death. |
| November 7–13 | Removal of 1,658 noncombatant Dakota to Fort Snelling. |
| November 9–10 | Sibley moves those sentenced to South Bend near Mankato. |
| December 6 | Number of Dakota sentenced to be executed is reduced to 40 by authorization of President Lincoln. |
| December 26 | 38 Dakota are executed by hanging at Mankato. |
| Spring, 1863 | Forced exile of most Dakota from Minnesota begins. |
| 1863– | Battles between some Dakota and U.S. military forces continue for years in the West. |

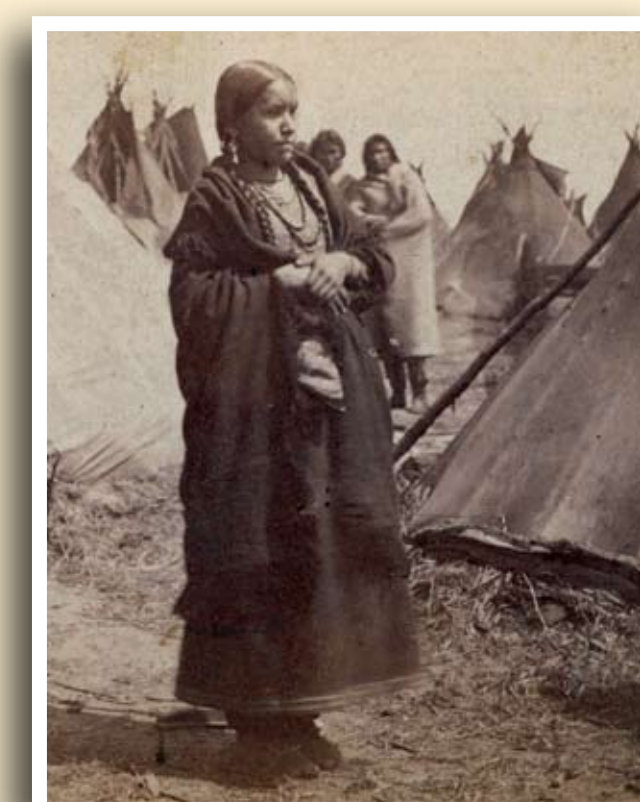
Experience showed Dakota Chief Maza's (Red Iron) that it did little good to stand in the way of the U.S. government. He had opposed the 1851 Treaty of Traverse des Sioux but, in the end, had little choice when he and other Dakota leaders signed it, selling most of their homeland.

In 1854 Maza's led his people to a small reservation on the Minnesota River and established a village near this spot, where families planted corn and children could attend school. Here, he worked to protect them and their way of life.

When Dakota from other bands began the war in August 1862, Maza's did not support it. He did not want to risk the life he and his people had built in their village. On September 6, as the fighting spread, he told a gathering of Dakota leaders, "My friends, I cannot bear the thought of everything of mine being destroyed. Therefore I will stay here."



An 1858 treaty delegation to Washington included Maza's (standing, third from left) and his brother Akipa (standing, far left).



Winona, daughter of Maza's, at the Fort Snelling concentration camp

Maza's did more than protect his village. He and other Dakota risked their own safety to protect from harm hundreds of captives taken during the war. He even turned away some of the warriors of Taoyateduta (Little Crow) when they tried to enter the village. After the fighting ended, Maza's's people helped to hand the captives over to the U.S. military.

In the end, although Maza's and many other Dakota had not joined the war, they all suffered its consequences. Maza's lost his home. His family and others who had not taken part in the fighting were removed to a concentration camp at Fort Snelling, where they awaited an unknown fate. Dakota warriors who had not already left were arrested, tried and convicted. Maza's and his brother Akipa (To Meet), assigned to accompany the prisoners to South Bend near Mankato, helped care for the condemned men.

"Your course was condemned at the time, but now you see your wisdom. You were right when you said the whites could not be exterminated, and the attempt indicated folly.... Today you are here at liberty, assisting in feeding and guarding us. And 39 men will die in two days because they did not follow your example and advice."

- Tazoo (Old Buffalo) to Chief Maza's at the prison camp near Mankato, quoted in "Through Dakota Eyes" (Minnesota Historical Society Press)



Chief Maza's (Red Iron)

"You commenced the outbreak and must do the fighting in your country. We do not want you here to excite our young men and get us into trouble."

- Chief Maza's (Red Iron) to warriors of Taoyateduta (Little Crow), as quoted in Samuel J. Brown's journal

