**Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee Reading Guide**

**Title**: Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee

**Author**: Dee Brown

**Setting**: The American West during the late 19th century, primarily from the 1860s to the 1890s

**Summary**: *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* is a seminal work that chronicles the systematic displacement and destruction of Native American tribes during the westward expansion of the United States. Unlike many historical accounts that center on the perspective of European-American settlers and the U.S. government, Brown's book provides a poignant narrative from the Native American viewpoint. It details numerous significant events, battles, and policies that led to the near annihilation of indigenous cultures and communities. The book emphasizes the broken treaties, forced relocations, and military campaigns that devastated Native American tribes. By humanizing the Native American experience and highlighting their resilience, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* serves as a powerful critique of American expansionism and a call to acknowledge historical injustices.

**Major Characters:**

**1. Sitting Bull (Hunkpapa Lakota):** A renowned leader and warrior, Sitting Bull played a critical role in the resistance against U.S. military forces. His leadership during the Battle of the Little Bighorn is particularly notable.

**2. Crazy Horse (Oglala Lakota):** Another key figure in the Native American resistance, Crazy Horse was a fearless warrior known for his tactical brilliance and commitment to his people's freedom.

**3. Chief Joseph (Nez Perce):** Famous for his eloquent speeches and strategic acumen, Chief Joseph led his people in a remarkable but ultimately tragic attempt to flee to Canada to avoid forced relocation.

**4. Geronimo (Apache):** A prominent leader of the Apache, Geronimo resisted both Mexican and American military campaigns for decades, symbolizing the enduring struggle for Native American autonomy.

**5. Red Cloud (Oglala Lakota):** A significant leader who successfully waged war against the U.S. Army, Red Cloud later advocated for his people's rights through diplomacy.

**Themes:**

* **Systemic Injustice and Betrayal**: The book highlights the repeated betrayals of treaties and agreements made with Native American tribes by the U.S. government. These broken promises led to widespread displacement and suffering.
* **Cultural Destruction and Resilience**: Brown emphasizes the cultural devastation experienced by Native American tribes, including the loss of land, traditional ways of life, and autonomy. Despite this, the resilience and strength of these communities are also showcased.
* **Military Conflict and Resistance**: The numerous battles and military campaigns described in the book illustrate the intense and often violent resistance mounted by Native American tribes against U.S. forces. Key conflicts, like the Battle of the Little Bighorn and the massacre at Wounded Knee, are pivotal events.
* **Impact of Policies and Legislation:** The book critically examines the impact of U.S. government policies, such as the Indian Removal Act and the establishment of reservations. These policies had long-lasting and often devastating effects on Native American communities.
* **Leadership and Sacrifice:** Brown highlights the courageous leadership and profound sacrifices made by Native American leaders. Figures like Sitting Bull, Red Cloud, and Crazy Horse exemplify the unwavering commitment to their people's survival and cultural preservation. These leaders often faced impossible choices and immense personal risk in their efforts to resist displacement and protect their communities.

**Review Questions**: Answering the following questions will increase your comprehension of the book. Respond to these questions by writing the answers in your notebook. *All the questions require you to express an opinion, evaluate the writing, synthesize what you have read with current reflections, or describe your reaction to events in the reading. In these instances, there is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will vary.*

**Chapter 1. Their Manners are Decorous and Praiseworthy**

1. Reflect on the significance of the names given to indigenous peoples by Europeans, such as "Indios". How did these names affect the identity and perception of indigenous peoples? Compare this to the importance of names in your own life and community. How has your name influenced your identity and experiences?
2. Tecumseh's speech is quoted at the beginning of the chapter. What is the significance of his words, and how do they capture the broader themes of resistance and survival among indigenous tribes? Why do you think the author started the book off with this speech and these words? What mood does this invoke at the beginning of the book?
3. The chapter introduces several indigenous leaders. Choose one leader mentioned in the chapter and discuss their contributions to their tribe's resistance efforts. How did their leadership impact their tribe's fate, and what legacy did they leave behind? Based on their actions and the historical context, what do you think might have happened if they had different resources or allies?
4. Columbus's decision to kidnap ten Tainos and transport them to Spain had profound immediate and long-term effects on the Tainos and other indigenous peoples in the Caribbean. What were these consequences, and how did they shape future relations between Europeans and Indigenous Americans? In what ways does the author’s writing enhance the reader's understanding of the severity and impact of these events? Use examples from the text to illustrate your points.

**Chapter 2. The Long Walk of the Navahos**

1. How does Manuelito use rhetoric to convey the initial peaceful relations between the Navahos and Americans? How effective do you think his speech is in highlighting the contrast between the early interactions and later conflicts? Include at least one quote that supports your thinking.
2. The chapter mentions various treaties and agreements made between the Navahos and Americans. What was the significance of these treaties, and how did they set a precedent for future interactions? How does Brown's depiction of these treaties help you understand their significance and impact?
3. The chapter details how treaties with the Navahos were repeatedly broken by the U.S. government, leading to significant suffering and displacement. What were the immediate and long-term consequences of these broken treaties for the Navahos? What modern examples of broken agreements or promises between governments and indigenous or marginalized communities can you find? How do these situations compare to the experiences of the Navahos as described in the chapter?
4. Reflect on the images included in this chapter. Why do you think Dee Brown chose to include these specific images alongside his text? Why do you think it is or is not important to have visual representations of historical figures and events in a book like this? Do you think these images help convey the gravity and reality of the historical events described? Explain your thinking.

**Chapter 3. Little Crow’s War**

1. The chapter begins with a quote from Wamditanka. What do you think Wamditanka is trying to convey with this statement? How does this quote set the tone for the chapter and the events that follow?
2. The chapter includes letters exchanged between Little Crow, General Sibley, and other figures. How do these primary sources enhance your understanding of the perspectives and motivations of the individuals involved in Little Crow’s War? Do you think the inclusion of these letters makes the text more compelling? Why or why not? Provide specific examples from the text to support your analysis.
3. President Lincoln reviewed the trial records of the 303 condemned Santee Sioux and decided to commute the sentences of most, approving the execution of only 39. Did former President Lincoln’s actions surprise you? Why or why not? Consider his decision in the context of the time period and his role as President during the Civil War. How do you think you would have responded if you were in Lincoln’s position, given the pressures and responsibilities he faced? Provide specific examples from the text to support your reasoning.
4. Find one quote from this chapter that you think embodies Little Crow. Include why you selected this quote and explain who Little Crow is to someone who has not heard of him before and who has not read this chapter.

**Chapter 4. War Comes to the Cheyennes**

1. Compare and contrast the leadership styles and decisions of Black Kettle and Governor Evans. How do their leadership approaches reflect their respective cultures and the broader conflict? Analyze the rhetoric used by both leaders in their communications. How does their rhetoric affect their credibility and persuasiveness?
2. Trust and betrayal are recurring themes in this chapter. Find one quote from this chapter that embodies this theme. Include your quote along with your explanation for selecting it. How did the incident you chose affect the actions or decisions of the Cheyenne?
3. Reflect on the real meaning of the Sand Creek Massacre as described in the chapter. What do you think were the underlying motives behind the massacre? Consider the perspectives of both the U.S. military and the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes. How does understanding these motives help you evaluate the broader historical context of U.S. expansion and Native American displacement?
4. The chapter concludes with a song. Why do you think the author chose to end the chapter with this song? How does it contribute to the overall text and themes of the chapter? Reflect on a time when a song or piece of music had a significant impact on you. How did it shape your understanding or emotions regarding a particular event or experience?

**Chapter 5. Powder River Invasion**

1. The chapter begins with a quote from Red Cloud. What do you think Red Cloud means by this statement? How does this quote set the tone for the chapter?
2. Analyze the event where Yellow Woman is killed by Pawnee scouts. What does this incident reveal about the complexities and shifting nature of alliances among Native American tribes? How does this event reflect the broader context of intertribal relations and conflicts during this period? Provide specific examples from the chapter to support your analysis.
3. After the Battle of Tongue River, the Arapahos and other tribes continue to resist U.S. military forces. How do these acts of resistance illustrate the tribes' determination to defend their land and way of life? What does this resistance signify for the future interactions between the Plains tribes and the U.S. government? Based on this resistance, predict how the relationship between the Plains tribes and the U.S. government might evolve in the subsequent chapters.
4. How might you describe Red Cloud to someone who has not read this book so far? Include at least one quote from the chapter to support your thinking. Reflect on a leader you admire. How do their qualities compare to those of Red Cloud?

**Chapter 6. Red Cloud’s War**

1. The chapter describes how the U.S. treaty commission finalized nine treaties with different Sioux groups, even though they were aware that no warrior chiefs had signed these agreements. What insights does this provide about the U.S. government's methods and intentions in treaty-making with Native American tribes? Cite specific examples from the text to support your analysis. What is your impression of this approach? Explain your thinking.
2. Analyze the tactics used by Red Cloud and his allies during the guerrilla war against the U.S. military. How did their strategies differ from traditional European-style warfare, and what advantages did these tactics provide? Reflect on the effectiveness of the writing in conveying the tension and strategies involved in these tactics. Do you think the author successfully immerses readers in the events?
3. How do you think the psychological impact of the Fetterman Massacre affected both the U.S. military and the Sioux warriors? Consider the descriptions of mutilations and the reactions of Colonel Carrington and his men. Reflect on how witnessing or hearing about such violence might influence a person's views on war and conflict.
4. Who were the Laramie Loafers, and what role did they play in Red Cloud’s War? How did their actions influence the dynamics between the U.S. military and the Sioux? Make a prediction about how the situation might have evolved if the Laramie Loafers had not been involved. How crucial were they to the unfolding events?

**Chapter 7. The Only Good Indian Is a Dead Indian**

1. Reflect on the historical context provided at the beginning of the chapter, including events such as the impeachment of President Johnson and the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment. How do these events contrast with the treatment of Native Americans during the same period? Why do you think the author includes this context at the beginning of this chapter?
2. The chapter begins with quotes from Tall Bull, Roman Nose, and Black Kettle addressing General Winfield Scott Hancock. Analyze these quotes and discuss what they reveal about the perspectives and grievances of these leaders. How do these quotes set the tone for the events that follow in the chapter?
3. Examine the cultural misunderstandings between the U.S. military and the Cheyennes, particularly during the councils and negotiations. How did these misunderstandings contribute to the escalation of conflict? Analyze the rhetoric used by both sides. How did language and communication barriers affect the outcomes?
4. Compare the events of the Fetterman Massacre discussed in the previous chapter to the attacks led by Roman Nose and the Dog Soldiers in this chapter. What similarities and differences do you notice in the tactics and outcomes? How does this comparison enhance your understanding of the broader conflict?

**Chapter 8. The Rise and Fall of the Donehogawa**

1. The chapter begins with a quote from Donehogawa about the extermination and displacement of Native American tribes. What does this quote reveal about his perspective on the treatment of Native Americans? Does this perspective resonate with you? Why or why not?
2. Compare the leadership styles of Donehogawa and Red Cloud. How did each leader navigate the challenges they faced with the U.S. government? What were the strengths and weaknesses of their approaches? Provide examples from the text to support your analysis.
3. Analyze the role of the Indian Ring and other political forces in undermining Donehogawa's efforts as Commissioner of Indian Affairs. How did these forces contribute to his eventual resignation? Provide specific examples from the text to support your analysis. Think about a time when external forces impacted your or someone else's ability to achieve a goal. How does that experience help you understand Donehogawa's challenges?
4. Reflect on Donehogawa's legacy as described in the chapter. How did his actions and reforms impact the treatment of Native Americans and the policies of the U.S. government? Do you think his efforts were ultimately successful or not? Why? How do you think history will remember Donehogawa? Compare his legacy to that of another historical figure who fought for justice and reform.

**Chapter 9. Cochise and the Apace Guerrillas**

1. The chapter begins with a series of significant events from 1871 and 1872, like the Great Chicago Fire and President Grant's proclamation against the Ku Klux Klan. How do these events frame the larger historical context in which the story of Cochise and the Apache guerrillas unfolds? Why might the author have chosen to include these events at the beginning of the chapter?
2. Reflect on the legacy of Cochise as presented in the chapter. How did his leadership and resistance efforts shape the history of the Apache people? In what ways does the chapter suggest that his legacy continued to influence Apache relations with the U.S. government after his death? Compare Cochise's legacy to that of a modern-day leader who has had a significant impact on their community or nation. How are their legacies similar or different, and what can you learn from them?
3. How did the Apaches' guerrilla warfare tactics reflect their determination to resist American encroachment and survive in a hostile environment? Provide examples from the chapter to illustrate their strategies and the challenges they faced. Evaluate the effectiveness of the author's writing in depicting these tactics and the resilience of the Apache people. How might these struggles be portrayed in a contemporary setting, such as in a documentary?
4. Discuss the peace negotiations between Cochise and General Gordon Granger. What were the terms proposed by Granger, and how did Cochise respond? How did this negotiation reflect the broader challenges of achieving peace between the Apaches and the U.S. government? Evaluate the negotiation within the specific historical context of the time. How might these negotiations differ if they were happening today, considering modern diplomatic practices?

**Chapter 10. The Ordeal of Captain Jack**

1. The chapter mentions that after the discovery of gold in 1848, white men poured into California, taking what they wanted from the native populations and systematically exterminating entire tribes. Discuss the impact of the Gold Rush on the Modoc people and other California tribes. How did the influx of settlers and the resulting conflicts shape the interactions between the native populations and the U.S. government? Reflect on a modern-day event where a natural resource discovery has led to similar conflicts. What parallels can you draw, and what lessons might be learned from the historical context of the Gold Rush?
2. Captain Jack states, "I am but one man. I am the voice of my people. Whatever their hearts are, that I talk." Analyze the rhetoric used in this quote. What does it reveal about Captain Jack's role and his connection to his people? How effective do you think this quote is in conveying his sense of duty and identity?
3. Describe the events that led to Captain Jack's distrust of the U.S. military and settlers. How did the incident at Lost River and the subsequent actions of both Captain Jack and the settlers shape the future interactions between the Modocs and the U.S. government? Do you think feelings of betrayal influenced the decisions and actions of Captain Jack and his followers? Explain your thinking.
4. Quite a bit happens during this chapter. Pick out what you think are the most important moments and work to create a concise five to ten sentence summary of this chapter. Share your reasons for selecting specific pieces and reasons for omitting others along with your summary.

**Chapter 11. The War to Save the Buffalo**

1. Both Satanta and Ten Bears express a deep desire to live freely on their native lands. How do their speeches reflect the broader themes of freedom and resistance against oppression? Analyze the rhetoric used in their speeches. Use quotes to support your analysis. How effective is their rhetoric in conveying their message?
2. The chapter mentions the Kiowa and Comanche sun dances. What is the significance of these ceremonies, and how do they reflect the tribes' cultural values and resistance to white encroachment? Reflect on a cultural or familial tradition that holds significant meaning for you. How does it shape your identity and values?
3. The extermination of the buffalo is a central issue in this chapter. How does the destruction of the buffalo herds affect the Native American tribes, both practically and symbolically? Discuss the implications of General Sheridan's statement on the extermination of buffalo within the specific historical context of the 19th century. How might this event be viewed differently today?
4. In the chapter, old Satank sings the death song of his Kiowa soldier society: "O sun, you remain forever, but we Kaitsenko must die. O earth, you remain forever, but we Kaitsenko must die." Reflect on the significance of this song within the context of the chapter. What does it reveal about Satank's character and the Kiowa's cultural values? How does this moment contribute to the overall themes of the book?

**Chapter 12. The War for the Black Hills**

1. The Treaty of 1868 promised the Black Hills to the Sioux "forever." Evaluate the U.S. government's actions in violating this treaty. How do these actions reflect the broader policies and attitudes of the U.S. government toward Native Americans during this period? Compare this to a modern example where a government or authority figure broke a promise or agreement.
2. The Sioux and Cheyenne warriors demonstrate significant resilience and resistance against the U.S. military. How are these themes developed throughout the chapter? Provide examples from the text. How do you think these themes are relevant to contemporary struggles for justice and rights?
3. Analyze the speeches made by Native American leaders during the councils with U.S. officials. How do they use rhetoric to assert their identity and rights? Provide specific examples from the text. What rhetorical strategies could you see yourself using that were used in this chapter? Explain your thinking.
4. At the end of the chapter the author includes The Buffalo Song. Reflect on the significance of this song within the context of the chapter. What does it reveal about the experiences and emotions of the Native American warriors after their struggles and battles? How does this song encapsulate the themes of loss and resilience? Additionally, evaluate why Dee Brown might have chosen to end the chapter with this song. How does this choice impact your understanding and emotional response to the text? Do you think this was an effective way to conclude the chapter? Why or why not?

**Chapter 13. The Flight of the Nez Percés**

1. The chapter describes several military engagements, including the battles at White Bird Canyon and the Big Hole River. Evaluate the effectiveness of Brown's writing in depicting these battles. How does he balance the perspectives of both the Native American warriors and the U.S. military? Reflect on how effective writing can shape your understanding of historical events.
2. Chief Joseph's surrender speech includes the line, "It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death." How does Joseph use imagery and emotional appeal in his speech to convey the dire situation of his people? What effect do you think this has on his audience, both at the time and for readers today? Provide specific examples from the text to support your analysis.
3. n September 1805, the Nez Percés chose to welcome and help the Lewis and Clark expedition, providing them with food and looking after their horses. Reflect on the significance of this decision. How did this act of kindness and cooperation shape the relationship between the Nez Percés and white Americans in the short term and long term? In hindsight, do you think the Nez Percés' decision to help Lewis and Clark had a positive or negative impact on their tribe? Why or why not?
4. If you could title this chapter differently while still capturing the purpose of the chapter, what title would you give it? Explain your choice.

**Chapter 14. Cheyenne Exodus**

1. The chapter begins with a quote from Little Wolf. Reflect on the emotional and rhetorical impact of this quote. How does Little Wolf convey the desperation and determination of his people? What emotions does this quote evoke in you as a reader? Provide specific examples to support your analysis.
2. The Cheyennes initially expected to live on the reservation with the Sioux. What were their expectations upon surrendering, and how did reality differ from these expectations? Provide specific examples from the text. How do these differences reflect the broader treatment of Native Americans by the U.S. government?
3. Reflect on the decision of Little Wolf and Dull Knife to lead their people back north despite the risks. What factors influenced their decision, and how did they prepare for the journey? Provide specific examples from the text. Do you agree with their decision? Explain your thinking.
4. Leadership and sacrifice are recurring themes in this chapter. Find one quote from this chapter that embodies these themes. Include your quote along with your explanation for selecting it. How did the incident you chose affect the actions or decisions of the Cheyenne?

**Chapter 15. Standing Bear Becomes a Person**

1. Standing Bear makes a speech in this chapter. What emotions and themes does this speech convey? How does it reflect the broader struggles of Native American tribes during this period? Analyze the rhetoric Standing Bear uses in his speech and its impact on you as a reader.
2. What was the significance of the legal case "Standing Bear v. Crook"? How did the outcome of this case challenge existing perceptions and laws regarding Native Americans? Predict how this case might have influenced future legal battles for Native American rights.
3. How did the public, including the press and local churches, react to Standing Bear’s plight? What role did public opinion play in the eventual outcome of the case? Compare this to a modern example where public opinion has influenced a legal or political outcome.
4. Evaluate the significance of Judge Dundy's ruling within the historical context of the late 19th century. How did prevailing attitudes towards Native Americans at the time make this ruling revolutionary? Consider the social and political implications of recognizing Native Americans as "persons" under the law. Were you surprised by this ruling given the context of the time? Explain your thinking.

**Chapter 16. The Utes Must Go!**

1. The chapter begins with a quote from Ouray the Arrow, Chief of the Utes. What does this quote reveal about the Utes' perspective on their relationship with the white settlers and the U.S. government? Evaluate the effectiveness of this quote in setting the tone for the chapter.
2. Choose one key moment in the chapter that you believe is crucial to the unfolding conflict between the Utes and the U.S. government. Describe the moment and explain why you think it is significant. How does this moment impact the overall chapter?
3. How might you describe Nathan C. Meeker to someone who has not read this chapter? Use specific quotes from the chapter to support your description. Analyze how Meeker's background and beliefs influenced his actions and decisions as an agent.
4. When Meeker decides to plow the Utes' pastureland despite their protests, what does this decision reveal about his character and his understanding of what it means to "civilize" the Utes? Do you think you would have made the same choice in his position? Why or why not? Provide examples from the text to support your reasoning.

**Chapter 17. The Last of the Apache Chiefs**

1. The chapter begins with a quote from Geronimo. What does this quote reveal about Geronimo’s perspective on his situation? Do you think this quote is effective in setting the tone for the chapter? Explain your thinking.
2. When Geronimo decides to surrender to General Crook under the condition that they would be returned to their reservation after two years, what does this decision reveal about his character and his understanding of what it means to survive? Do you think you would have made the same choice in his position? Why or why not? Provide examples from the text to support your reasoning.
3. Analyze the rhetoric used by General Crook in his communications with the Apaches and the U.S. government. How does his language reflect his attitudes and intentions toward the Apaches? Evaluate the effectiveness of his rhetoric in achieving his goals.
4. Quite a bit happens during this chapter. Pick out what you think are the most important moments and work to create a concise five to ten sentence summary of this chapter. Share your reasons for selecting specific pieces and reasons for omitting others along with your summary. Reflect on how these moments collectively shape the reader's understanding of the Apaches' plight.

**Chapter 18. Dance of the Ghosts**

1. The chapter begins with three quotes. Which quote resonates with you the most and why? What tone do you think these quotes set for the rest of the chapter? Explain your thinking.
2. How did the U.S. government attempt to break up the Great Sioux Reservation in the late 1870s and 1880s? Evaluate the effectiveness of these tactics from both the government's perspective and the Sioux perspective. What does this reveal about the broader U.S. policy towards Native Americans during this period?
3. How did U.S. government officials and Indian agents react to the spread of the Ghost Dance? Evaluate their response within the historical context of U.S.-Native American relations in the late 19th century. How might authorities treat a similar spiritual or cultural movement today?
4. Discuss Sitting Bull's participation in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. How might this experience be viewed differently by contemporary audiences compared to those of the late 19th century? Predict how Sitting Bull's legacy might be perceived if he were alive today.

**Chapter 19. Wounded Knee**

1. The chapter begins with a quote from Red Cloud: "There was no hope on earth, and God seemed to have forgotten us." How does this quote set the emotional tone for the chapter? What inferences can you make about the state of mind of the Sioux people at this time based on this quote? How does this introduction frame the events that follow?
2. Detail the sequence of events that led to the massacre at Wounded Knee. How did the actions of the U.S. government contribute to this tragic event? Assess these actions within the larger framework of U.S.-Native American relations during that period. Based on these events, what inferences can you make about the government's overall attitude and policy toward Native Americans at the time?
3. The chapter concludes with Black Elk's reflection and the song The Earth Only Endures. Do you think this is an effective way to end the chapter and the book? Why or why not? What impact does it leave on you?
4. What is your biggest takeaway from reading this book? Would you recommend this book to a friend? Explain your thinking.

**Answers to Review Questions:**

\*Answers will vary for each question