**Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee** by Dee Brown

Reading and Study Guide

The following material is NOT a required writing assignment. It is intended to help you read and think about the meaning and significance of the work. Some of these questions may be the kinds of things your teachers of US History may ask you about in class. They may also become the basis of writing assignments for your class. In any case they will serve to help you make sense of the vast and emotionally challenging material contained in this New York Times best-selling classic.

1. **Introduction**

   In the foreword, Hampton Sides explains the instant popularity of *Bury My Heart* (5 million copies in a dozen languages) by pointing out that it was published shortly after the revelations of the My Lai massacre and the anguish of the Vietnam War.

   He goes on to say that the book ‘explores the dark roots of American arrogance and dealt a near-death blow to our fondest folk myths’.

   - Why would this book become a best seller during the Vietnam War era?

   - *What is the relationship between the ‘anguish of the My Lai massacre’ and the story of how the West was ‘won’ from the vantage point of those who ‘lost’ it - the Apaches, the Nez Perces, the Cheyennes, the Sioux, the Navahos?*

   Critics have called Dee Brown’s work ‘revisionist history’ - one that dismissed the old stereotypes of American Indians and the winning of the West. It also raises questions about the ‘arrogant presumptions of Manifest Destiny’.

   - *What is ‘revisionist history’? In what ways does this book question the presumptions and implications of Manifest Destiny? Do you agree?*

   The title of the book comes from the last lines of a poem by Stephen Vincent Benet “American Names”. What is its significance to the story of *Bury My Heart?*

2. **Chapter One** is a broad survey of the history, geography and demography of the people known variously as **Indios, Indainer, peaux-rouges or simply Indians.**

   - Create a map of the United States which illustrates the this history and demography of American Indians. Be sure to show the original homelands and places of significance to the history of the Native Americans.

   - Identify the importance of the following to the study of American Indians:
     - King Philipp’s War
     - Sharp knife
     - ‘Permanent Indian frontier’
     - 95th meridian
     - Trail of Tears
     - Discovery of Gold in California
Based on your reading of Chapter one, evaluate (agree or disagree) with Dee Brown’s statement the ‘ in an age without heroes, they (American Indian leaders such as Chief Joseph, Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, Mangas Colorado, Geronimo, Lone Wolf and Red Cloud etc) are perhaps the most heroic of all Americans.”

*Perhaps you should wait to complete the entire book before you answer!

3. **Based on your reading of Chapter Two**, evaluate the American belief in Manifest Destiny as proclaimed by Star Chief General James Carleton. How would the American Indians, then and now, respond?

   - Why was General James Carleton removed from his command?

   - In what ways did the Navahos come to realize that they were the ‘least unfortunate of all the western Indians”?

   -Identify the importance of the following:
     - Pistol Bullet horse race
     - Manuelito
     - Fort Wingate massacre
     - Peach Trees
     - Long Walk to Fort Sumner
     - Bosque Redondo

4. **Based on your reading of Chapter Three**, compare the treatment of the Santee Sioux by the people of the state of Minnesota with the Nazi treatment of European Jews, especially those living in Eastern Europe.

   Was the ‘scalp bounty’( and the slogan ‘Exterminate or Banish’ and the forced removal to reservations) by Minnesotans the same as the ethnic cleansing, (and the wearing of the Jewish star and the forced removal to concentration camps) of Jews by Nazis? Explain why or why not.

   -Identify the importance of the following:
     - Little Crow
     - Credit system
     - ‘go eat grass or your own dung’
     - Abraham Lincoln’s role in executions of Sioux prisoners
     - ‘America’s greatest mass execution
     - Visit of Tatanka Yotanka

5. **Based on your reading of Chapter Four**, what was the motive and meaning of the Sand Creek Massacre? How and why did the Cheyennes and Arapahos abandon their claims to their ancestral lands in Colorado Territory?

   -Based on your thinking above, do you think that Colorado Governor Evan’s Proclamation “authorizing all citizens of Colorado, either individually or in such parties
as the may organize, to go in pursuit of all hostile Indians…..and to kill and destroy as enemies of the country wherever they may be found, all such hostile Indians” is comparable to the Nazi’s decision to enact the Final Solution at the Wanasee Conference? Explain why or why not?

-Identify the following:
  - Laramie Treaty of 1851
  - Pike’s Peak Gold Rush
  - ‘freedom of movement’
  - Black Kettle’s flag
  - Col John Chivington’s Colorado Volunteers
  - Gov. Evans decree
  - ‘Nits make lice’
  - Alliance of Cheyenne, Arapaho and Sioux
  - The People

6. **Based on your reading of Chapter Five**, what lesson did the leaders of the Plains Indians learn about fighting *Bluecoats*.

-Identify the following:
  - ‘sun dance’
  - The destruction of Little Horse camp on the Tongue River
  - Paha-Sapa ‘the center of the world’ (locate by latitude and longitude)
  - General Patrick Connor’s orders and expedition into Powder River

7. **Based on your reading of Chapter Six**, what contradiction do you see in the Civil Rights Bill of 1866 as it regards Indians and African Americans?

-Why was Col. Maynadier surprised to see tears in Spotted Tail’s eyes? How could he not know that an Indian could weep?

-What was Red Cloud’s strategy and tactics regarding US soldiers in the Powder River basin? Did it succeed? What was the outcome of Red Cloud’s War? Was it permanent?

-Identify the following
  - Laramie Loafers
  - Death of Fleet Foot
  - The Battle of the Hundred Slain/ Fetterman Massacre
  - Worst defeat suffered by US Army in Indian warfare
  - Hayfield and Wagon Box fights
  - Treaty of 1868
8. **Based on your reading of Chapter Seven**, explain how the war that General Winfield Scott Hancock, hero of the Civil War, came to prevent, he foolishly precipitated.

- What did Old Man of the Thunder mean when he said that the ‘white man is coming out here so fast that nothing can stop him…like a prairie fire in a high wind’? Is this a good justification for Manifest Destiny?

- Explain the Great Warrior Sherman’s statement that’50 hostile Indians will checkmate 3,000 soldiers…it makes little difference whether they be coaxed out or killed’?

- What was the derivation of the popular American saying ‘The only good Indian is a dead Indian’? In what way is this an example of racial and ethnic stereotyping?

- Identify the following:
  - Roman Nose
  - Hard Backsides
  - George Bent
  - Forsyth’s Scouts
  - Battle of Beecher’s Island
  - “Garry Owen”
  - Washita Ford Massacre
  - Black Kettle

9. **Based on your reading of Chapter 8**, explain how and why Donehowagwa at first succeeded in gaining some measure of respect for the Plains Indians but was forced to resign his post as Commissioner of Indian Affairs?

- What was the discrepancy (trick?) contained in the terms of Treaty of 1866 in regards to the right of the Sioux to settle permanently along the Powder River? How was it settled?

- Identify the following:
  - Red Cloud’s ‘victory’/ Sitting Bull’s response
  - Red Cloud’s ride on the Iron Horse to Washington
  - Big Horn Association
  - Indian Ring
  - William Welsh
  - Ely Parker

10. **Based on your reading of Chapter 9**, compare the actions of and reactions against Ely Parker, Lt. Royal Whitman, Tom Jeffords and John Clum. Were they the exceptions or were they in the mainstream among white Americans in Southwestern United States?

- “We will make peace. We will keep it faithfully. But let us go around free as the Americans do. Let us go wherever we please.”
  - Why couldn’t the Americans just let the Apaches and other Indians ‘go wherever they pleased’?
- What was the immediate cause of Cochise’s guerilla warfare? Is there a comparison to be made between Osam Bin Laden and Al Quaeida’s international terrorism and Cochise’s guerilla warfare? What was the cost to the US of both ‘wars’?

- Who was Mangas Colorado? What was his relationship to Cochise? What became of him?
- What was the meaning and purpose of Cochise’s oration? Was Cochise a Christian? What did he mean when he referred to the Virgin Mary?

- Identify the following:
  Wagon-guns
  Eskiminizin
  Tucson Committee of Public Safety
  Fort Grant Massacre
  Trial of Tucson killers
  Taglito Jeffords
  Alamosa scheme
  The Gray Wolf

11. **Based on your reading of Chapter 10**, carefully explain the ‘ordeal of Captain Jack’ from his initial friendship of white men to his body being exhibited at carnivals for a ten-cent admission fee. Is there any symbolism in the timing of his death?

- What did Kintpaush mean when he said that ‘You white people conquered me not; my own men did.”

- State both sides of the dilemma facing Captain Jack. Why did he decide to kill General Canby?

- Why could the Modocs NOT simply live by the terms of the original treaty by which they would be provided all their needs by the US government?

Identify the following:

Yreka
Klamath Indians
Modoc ‘tax’ on white fiends
California Lava Beds
Winema
General Canby
Meacham
Hooker Jim
12. Based on your reading of Chapter 11, describe the two sides in the ‘War to Save to Buffalo’ in terms of motives and purpose and strategy of both sides.

- Explain the irony of white men teaching Indians to plant corn!

- By this point in the book, you should be able to identify each of the 13 ‘moons’ of Indian life.

  - Why did Santanta claim his responsibility for leading the raid against Texas buffalo hunters?
  - What was the cause and consequence of the trial of Big Tree and Santanta? How did Lone Wolf diplomacy change the outcome of the sentence and the future for Santanta?

  - Defend and refute Kicking Bird’s role in the judgment of his brother tribesmen.

  - Explain the mysterious connection between the deaths of the great Indian leaders in the war to save the buffalo?

  - Identify the following:
    - Fort Sill
    - ‘Heap big nice sonabitch’
    - Bald Head
    - Buffalo soldiers
    - Kicking Bird
    - Kiowa
    - Mamanti
    - Atoka
    - Sun dance
    - Quanah Parker
    - Isatai
    - Buffalo rifles
    - Siege of Adobe Walls
    - The place of Chinaberry Trees, Palo Duro Canyon

13. Before you read Chapter Twelve, research the Indian Ring frauds and Secretary of War Jeremy Belknap’s complicity. What was the result of this scandal, both for the Indians and for those involved in the scandal? What, if any, changes resulting from this scandal were made in the way American Indians were treated by the US government?

   Also, research the terms and circumstances surrounding the signing of the Treaty of 1868 …"No white person or persons shall be permitted to settle upon or occupy any portion of the territory, or without the consent of the Indians to pass through the same. It will be necessary for three quarters of the male adults of the Sioux tribes to change any terms of the treaty."

   Is this what the Indians signed? Is this what the US government agreed to?
How was it changed?
- Do you see any connection between the wars against the Indians and the racial wars against the African Americans of South Carolina in mid to late 1876?

- **Based on your reading of Chapter Twelve**, describe the chain of events which set in motion the greatest defeat ever suffered by the United States Army in the wars with American Indians at the battle at Little Bighorn –known as Custer’s Last Stand.

- What were the differences in their behaviors and attitudes between Red Cloud and Sitting and Crazy Horse? What difference did this difference make for their respective futures?
- Do you think that the Sioux and other tribes of should have accepted the US offer for the Black Hills? Why did Spotted Tail consider the proposal to be a “ludicrous joke”?

- What was Crazy Horse’s distinction between the” world men lived in and the real world”? What was the meaning of his dream in which he heard the voice of Wakantanka saying: “I give you these because they have no ears”? How did he translate his dreams into military tactics?

- Describe the circumstances surrounding the surrender of Red Cloud and the death of Crazy Horse? What ironic role did Little Big man play? What became of Sitting Bull?

- Who killed Pahuska?

- Identify the following:
  Thieves Road
  ‘not even as much as a pinch of dust”
  Commission of 1875
  ‘wild chiefs”
  Major Marcus Reno
  Gall
  Frank Grouard
  American Horse
  Bear Coat
  Land of Grandmother
  Chankpe Opi Walpala
14. **Based on your reading of Chapter Thirteen**, describe Chief Joseph’s concept of ‘freedom’. Why was this not possible for white Americans to offer American Indians?

- Describe the form of apartheid proposed by Gov. Isaac Stevens of Washington Territory. How is this similar to and different from the apartheid imposed on African Americans in the Jim Crow era? … To the apartheid imposed on black South Africans.

- Describe the dilemma facing Chief Joseph as he was “trapped between the pressures of the white man and the fury of his desperate people”. Which side did he choose?

- Why did Chief Joseph not want the schools which were offered by the white man?

- Explain how the Nez Perces transformed from the friendly Indians who nurtured and protected Lewis and Clark into the fierce warriors who would rather die than surrender to the white man?

  - What became of Chief Joseph?

- Identify the following:
  - Washington Treaty of 1855
  - ‘thief treaty’ of 1863

15. **Based on your reading of Chapter Fourteen**, what was the significance of the feast shared by Northern and Southern Cheyennes? What role did Secretary of Interior Carl Schurz play in this situation?

- Why did the Cheyennes call Schurz, Mah-hah Ich-hon?

- What ultimately became of the ‘Beautiful people’?

16. **Based on your reading of Chapter Fifteen**, explain the meaning of the title. How and in what way did Standing Bear become a ‘man’?

- Describe the Poncas. How were they different from other Plains Indians?

- Carefully describe the change in behavior and attitude of Three Stars General Crook toward the Poncas as a people and Indians in general? How would you explain this turnabout?

- Describe the implication of the court ruling in the case Standing Bear v Crook to the whole US Indian” military-political- reservation system’. How did General Sherman and Carl Schurz react to this court ruling?

- Identify the following:
  - Writ of habeas corpus
  - Judge Elmer S. Dundy
  - Thomas Henry Tibbles
17. Based on your reading of Sixteen, explain the leaders, their motives and strategy involved in the ‘Utes Must Go’ campaign?

- Identify the proposed change in the treaty of 1863. What motivated this proposal? In what way did Ouray become a ‘part of the establishment’ as a result of this new treaty?

- Identify Father Meeker. What was his attitude toward the Indians who he was charged with protecting? How did the Utes react to him?

18. Based on your reading of Chapter Seventeen, research the Indian School of Carlisle Pa. What was its purpose and how did it carry out its goals?

- Who was John Clum and what did he do to help the Apache people? How was his behavior and attitude different from Father Meeker’s?

- Describe the reforms which General George Crook attempted to bring about in his relations with the Chiricahua Apaches their leader Goyathlay? Was Crook successful?

- Compare and contrast the behavior and attitude toward white men of Geronimo and Victorio. What became of both of these Apache leaders?

- What was the role played by the ‘Tucson Ring’ in furthering the interests of the US Indian ‘ military-political-reservation’ system? Identify some of them by name and was their motive and strategy?

19. Based on your reading of Chapter Eighteen, identify the Messiah and explain the tenets of his religion, known as the Ghost Dance. In what ways were they essentially the same as those of any Christian church? Why did the US Army officers and Indian Bureau agents oppose the Ghost Dance? Why did the Plains Indians embrace it?

- Locate the area of Canada in which Sitting Bull and his people were living. What was the Canadian government’s attitude toward them?

- Why did the US government react the way it did to Geronimo living in Mexico and Sitting Bull living free in Canada?

- What was the purpose of the Dawes Commission? How did Sitting Bull react to being called to testify? What did he have to say to the US Senators present? How did they react to his words?

- What were the circumstances and what did Sitting Bull mean when he shouted to news reporters ‘There are no Indians left but me!’

- Describe the reason that Sitting Bull was finally arrested and the circumstances surrounding his death.
20. **Based on your reading of Chapter Nineteen,** describe how and why the slaughter took place at Wounded Knee. Was this the inevitable ending to the conflicted relationship between white Americans and American Indians? Could this saga have ended another way?

- Explain the irony of the Sioux reaction to the assassination of Sitting Bull and the dancing horse.

- At this point in your study, it would be a good idea to revisit your initial thoughts concerning heroes. How many whites and how many Indians (be specific and name them) would you consider to be heroes in the sense of role models for your children?

- It would be a great idea at this point to interview those LaSalle students and/or teachers who spent time this summer working on Indian reservations and with American Indians. Your interview should ascertain living conditions, citizenship status, historical resentments toward white America, aspirations, and expectations for the future.