

The treaty of Fort Laramie, like most other treaties with the Plains Tribes, was quickly broken. The Indians broke it first.

70A Before the year 1851 was out, before the Senate could decide to ratify, the warlike tribes were at each other's throats again.

The first article of the treaty had provided that they would agree to abstain in future from all hostilities against each other, to maintain good faith and friendship in their mutual intercourse, to make an effective and lasting peace among themselves. Eastern humanitarians and pacifists may have hoped that the redskins would not break this pledge, but surely nobody who knew the Plains and the warlike character of the Indians there could have had any firm expectation that it could be kept.

For generations the implacable, aggressive Blackfeet and their only allies, the thieving Atsena or Big Bellies (Gros Ventres of the Prairie) had been fighting the Cree, Assinaboine, Dakota, Crow, Flathead, Kutenai tribes -- and such hapless white men as came among them.

Their neighbors, the feckless Assinaboine or Stone Boilers, though few in number and friendly with the Cree, continually had to defend themselves against the Sioux or Dakota, the Blackfeet, and the Cheyenne.

The Crow, farther south, were good fighters, expert horsethieves. They had no consistent friends but the white men, and not infrequently robbed them. They were forever fighting with the Blackfeet, Dakota, Cheyenne and Arapaho.

The seven tribes of Prairie Sioux or Teton Dakota maintained almost perpetual war with the white men, ^{the} Assinaboine, Shoshone, Pawnee, Crow, Mandan, Ree, Kiowa, Blackfeet, Flathead, Gros Ventres of the Prairie, Gros Ventres of the Village, Cree, and Chippewa, Comanche tribes, and still found time to raid the Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Omaha, Osage, Oto, and Ponca, as well as Bannock, Nez Percé, and Ute.

The haughty Cheyenne habitually fought against all of the enemies of the Sioux, against the Mexicans -- and after the early '60s, against the whites. The easy-going Arapaho usually went along with their Sioux and Cheyenne allies, though taking most of their scalps from the Shoshone, Ute, Pawnee, Navajo, and white men.