

in 1864 and 1865, will perhaps never be fully known or appreciated. They were numerous and shockingly revolting in their details, men, women and children falling alike victims to their cruelty. Wagon trains and ranches were burned, stage stations and telegraph offices robbed and destroyed, and private dwellings laid waste for hundreds of miles on all the various lines of travel from the Missouri River to the Rocky Mountains. The overland stage line and the Pacific telegraph enjoyed no exemption from their outrages, and during a large proportion of the time it was impossible either to run the one or to operate the other. Large bodies of troops were dispatched to the scene of disaster under the command of officers of acknowledged ability and experience, but the Indians successfully eluded their pursuers, concealing themselves in canyons by day, and perpetrating fresh atrocities by night.

These marauding parties were led chiefly by Spotted Tail, who was considered by the whites as responsible for the bad west of the Black Hills and did not participate in these troubles. Being little disturbed in their rich buffalo ranges, they had no such occasion to make trouble for the whites. The Oglalas at this period were subject to Mischief Maker as head chief, recognized by General Harney, and ten sub-chiefs, Harney-made, one of whom was Red Cloud, who by 1865 had come to be considered, by the Indians themselves, as leading chief of the nation.

The development of the gold mines in Idaho and Montana led to a demand for better roads from the states into these sections and by the 1st of March, 1865, congress passed a bill providing for a road connecting with the California trail near Fort Laramie and thence to proceed diagonally across the country west of the Black Hills, through the headwaters of the ³⁵² / Tongue, Powder and Big Horn Rivers, skirting the Big Horn Mountains to Bozeman, in Montana. This line would provide a direct route from the central states, but the northern states of Wisconsin and Minnesota desiring to share in the business, it was proposed to