



Dakota Information Card

Chief Wabasha (ca. 1720)

An important Dakota leader named Chief Wabasha, who was also called “Red Leaf”, was born around 1720. The exact date of his death is unknown. He is from a long line of Dakota leaders who carried the name “Wabasha.”

In 1776, Wabasha III was became a British General for his role in the American Revolution. Chief Wabasha was important in establishing trade and military ties among the Dakota and the British, and brought 1,000 warriors to fight on the side of the British during the revolution. Even though the British eventually lost the war against the Americans in 1783, Wabasha and other Dakota leaders did not transfer their allegiance to the Americans, remaining loyal to the British Crown following their defeat.

In 1787, the Dakota signed a written treaty with the Crown at Michilimackinac. The use of the calumet, wampum, and gift giving guaranteed this alliance in the eyes of the Dakota. Representatives of the Mdewakanton, Sisseton, Wahpeton, Wahpekute, Teton, Yankton, and Yanktonais were present. Signatories included Wabasha and Tatanka Mani. As part of the agreement, the Crown promised the Dakota would gain the “protection of the Great King.”¹

Information adapted from:

Danyluk, Stephanie, et al. *Wa Pa HaSka: Whitecap Dakota First Nation*. Saskatoon, SK: Whitecap Dakota First Nation and the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, 2016.

¹ Articles of Peace at Michilimackinac, 12 July 1787, RG 10, Vol. 16, 157-60, Reel C-1224, Library and Archives Canada.