

“LET THEM EAT GRASS!”

Henry H. Sibley

1811–1891



written & illustrated by desire grover

HENRY H. SIBLEY WAS A FRIEND TO THE DAKOTA TRIBES AT THE EARLIEST PART OF HIS LIFE. HE LEARNED THEIR LANGUAGE, TRADED WITH THEM, NEGOTIATED THEIR TREATIES AND HAD A DAUGHTER WITH A DAKOTA WOMAN NAMED "RED BLANKET WOMAN."



YET HIS GROWING DEBT PROBLEMS AS A **FUR TRADER** WOULD COMPROMISE HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM AND HIS RESPONSIBILITIES TO **THE U.S. GOVERNMENT** WOULD PROVE CATASTROPHIC FOR **THE DAKOTA PEOPLE**.



OVER HUNTING BY **FUR TRADERS** THREATENED THE **DAKOTA'S** SURVIVAL. TO AVOID BLOODSHED THE TRIBES PARTICIPATED IN THE WHITE SETTLERS' WAY OF LIFE ONLY TO FIND THEMSELVES MANIPULATED INTO **INSURMOUNTABLE DEBTS**.

DIDN'T YOU RECEIVE
YOUR CUT WHEN OUR
INSTALLMENT CAME IN?

WELL PRICES
HAVE INCREASED
SINCE YOUR
LAST PAYMENT.



TO RESOLVE THIS DEBT THE DAKOTA SIGNED A SERIES OF **TREATIES** AT THE DIRECTION OF **SIBLEY** AND THEIR CHIEF **LITTLE CROW**. THEY GAVE AWAY **24 MILLION ACRES OF LAND** EXPECTING TO RECEIVE A **PAYMENT OF \$1,665,000**. THE MONEY WAS TO HELP BUY FOOD AND DAILY SUPPLIES.



LATER THE TRIBES LEARNED THAT SIBLEY HAD TRICKED THEM, HAVING THEM SIGN AN **ENGLISH VERSION** OF THE TREATY THAT WAS NOT THE SAME AS THE **DAKOTA VERSION**. A LARGE PORTION OF THE MONEY PROMISED WOULD FIRST GO TO THE **WHITE MERCHANTS AND FUR TRADERS**.



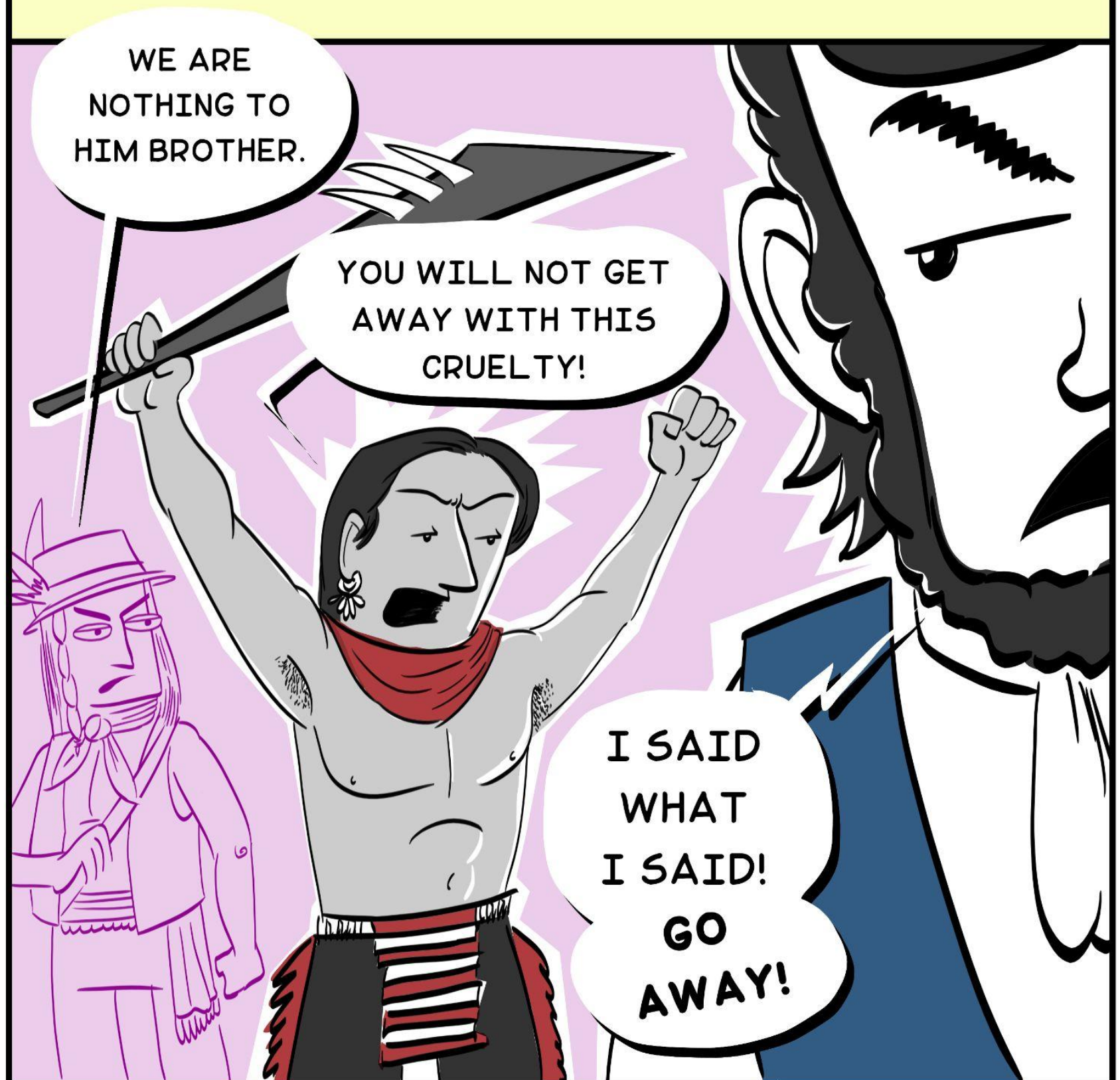
IN 1861, **THE CIVIL WAR** HAD BEGUN, CAUSING SUPPLY AND PAYMENT DELAYS. AS A RESULT, THE TRIBES WERE STARVING. OUT OF DESPERATION. **THE DAKOTA** BEGAN TO BEG FOR MORE CREDIT TO PURCHASE FOOD FROM A STORE OWNER NAMED **ANDREW MYRICK**. HE REFUSED!

PLEASE HELP
US. OUR
CHILDREN ARE
STARVING!

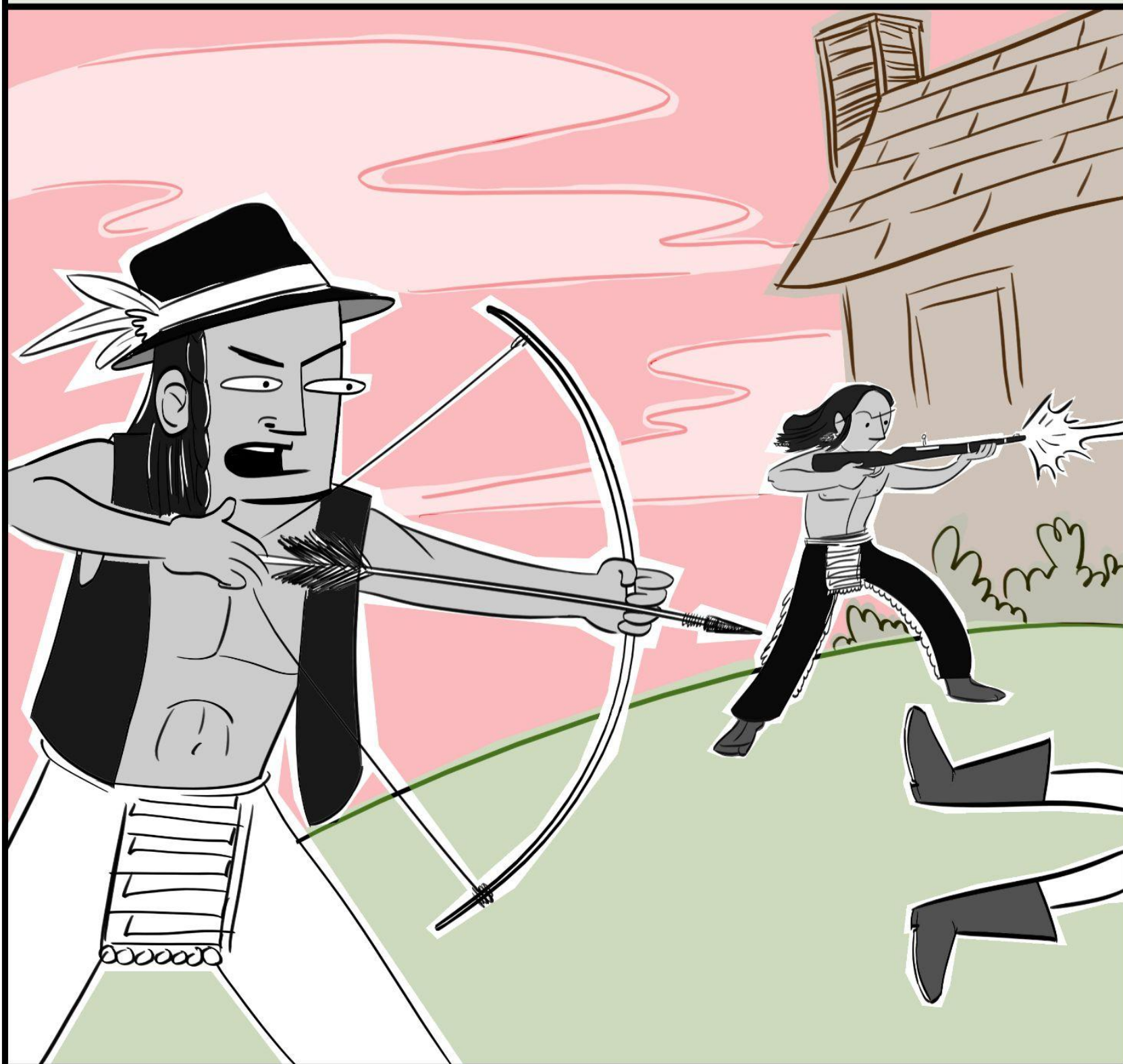
YOUR MONEY HAS
NOT COME IN SO
NO FOOD!



ONE DAY, DURING AN ARGUMENT OVER FOOD, MYRICK WALKED AWAY FROM THE DAKOTA, SAYING TO THEIR TRANSLATOR "IF THEY ARE HUNGRY, LET THEM EAT GRASS!" THIS ENRAGED THOSE WHO WERE PRESENT!



DAYS LATER, FOUR DAKOTA WOULD GO INTO A WHITE SETTLEMENT AND **KILL THREE MEN AND TWO WOMEN**. THEY RETURNED TO THEIR VILLAGE TELLING EVERYONE WHAT THEY HAD DONE, PRESSURING **CHIEF LITTLE CROW** TO DECLARE WAR WITH THE SETTLERS. **ANDREW MYRICK** WAS LATER FOUND DEAD WITH ARROWS IN HIS BODY AND **GRASS STUFFED IN HIS MOUTH**.



THE WAR WAGED FOR SIX WEEKS, LEADING TO THE DEATHS OF ABOUT **700 SETTLERS AND 100 DAKOTA**. AS A COLONEL, **SIBLEY ARRESTED 392 DAKOTA MEN**, PUTTING THEM ON TRIAL FOR WAR CRIMES! HIS AD HOC COURT WOULD **CONVICT 303** OF THEM, SENTENCING THEM **TO HANGING**.



PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN STEPPED IN AND HAD LAWYERS REVIEW THE COURT TRANSCRIPTS. HE THEN PROVIDED A LIST OF 38 NAMES THAT FIT THE CRITERIA FOR HANGING. THE DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS **38 DAKOTA MEN WERE HUNG** IN FRONT OF A CROWD OF THOUSANDS. IT WOULD BE THE **LARGEST EXECUTION IN U.S. HISTORY!**



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