



Benjamin Disraeli

“DON’T CHEER,  
BOYS; THOSE  
POOR DEVILS  
ARE DYING.”

JOHN W. PHILIP (1840–1900), AMERICAN  
MILITARY COM-  
MANDER, AFTER THE  
BATTLE OF SANTIAGO,  
1898

“I THOUGHT HE  
WAS A YOUNG  
MAN OF  
PROMISE; BUT  
IT APPEARS HE  
WAS A YOUNG  
MAN OF  
PROMISES.”

ARTHUR BALFOUR  
(1848–1930), BRITISH  
STATESMAN, OF THE  
ENTRY OF WINSTON  
CHURCHILL INTO  
POLITICS, 1899

## Bushranger Hanged at Old Melbourne Gaol

**Melbourne, Australia, November 11, 1880:**

The notorious Victorian bushranger Ned Kelly was hanged at the Old Melbourne Gaol today for killing three policemen at Stringybark Creek in October 1878.

The “Kelly Gang,” as the group became known, robbed two banks. One of these was a daring raid at Jerilderie in New South Wales, where they captured the town’s policeman and made off with more than £2,000 from the bank’s vaults.

Last year they put together armor as protection against police bullets. They roughly fashioned metal plates together over hot fires; the invention soon became their trademark.

In June 1880, they killed a police informer, and when the police traced the gang to the township of Glenrowan, a gun battle took place that lasted half a day and left the three other members of Ned’s gang dead. Kelly himself was wounded and easily captured, and today, at the age of just 25, he paid the ultimate price for his murderous years on the run.

## Island Destroyed by Massive Eruption

**Sunda Strait, Dutch East Indies, August 27, 1883:** A massive volcanic eruption has occurred on the island of Rakata in the Sunda Strait, between Java and Sumatra.

It’s already being called the greatest volcanic eruption in history. Massive tidal waves swept over 165 coastal villages when the flank of the Krakatoa volcano fell into the sea, with a death toll estimated at more than 30,000.

On the island of Sebesi, to the north-east, 3,000 people were washed out to sea and all the vegetation was uprooted.

Seventy-five percent of the land area of Rakata has disappeared.

Tidal gauges in Aden, Yemen, recorded the wave as reaching the Yemen shoreline in only 12 hours, and the eruption was heard as far away as Rodriguez Island, some 2,800 miles (4,480 km) distant, in the Indian Ocean. It is also being reported that ash from the eruption is falling on Singapore.

There were four distinct explosions, the last of which opened fissures in the walls of the volcano, allowing sea water to flood the subterranean magma chamber. The resultant explosion virtually destroyed the island.

Pyroclastic flows occur when the eruption column, which contains vast amounts of ash, dust, and rock, collapses under its own weight when gases erupting from the volcano can no longer support the column. Traveling at nearly 100 mph (160 kph), these flows raced down the sides of the volcano and, incredibly, had enough heat and momentum to continue across the waters of the Sunda Strait and kill 2,000 people 25 miles (40 km) away in Sumatra.

## French Extend Influence in Indochina

**Hue, Vietnam, June 6, 1884:** Vietnamese scholar—officials have been forced into signing the Treaty of Hue, confirming the Harmand Convention signed last year. A Treaty of Protectorate signed at the convention established a French protectorate over northern and central Vietnam, formally ending Vietnam’s indpendence. The French have been extending their influence in Vietnam since 1858 when their warships first fired on Vietnamese ports.

By June 1862 Emperor Tu Duc had signed a treaty with the French which ceded control of three provinces around Gia Dinh, which was renamed Saigon by the French. Hue fell to French forces last year, not long after the Emperor’s death.



Shock waves from the eruption at Krakatoa were felt across the world.

It is believed the signing of the Treaty of Hue will enable the French to deal more effectively with continual disruptions by China to French trading arrangements in the country’s north.

## Indian Resistance Ends at Wounded Knee

**South Dakota, USA, January 15, 1891:**

Largely as a result of the recent massacre at Wounded Knee and the subsequent Indian attack on the 7th Cavalry at White Clay Creek, representatives of the Sioux nation laid down their arms today, which has brought to an end decades of hostility throughout the Great Plains.

The recent rise in Indian militancy resulting from the “Ghost Dance” phenomenon is being seen as heightening tensions, particularly in regard to the Lakota Sioux, and is being viewed as a key ingredient in the lead-up to Wounded Knee. This “Ghost Dance” must be understood if any sense is to be made of this appalling slaughter of the innocents.

A young Paiute mystic named Wovoka, who was born in Nevada in the 1850s and raised by a white rancher, is claimed to have fallen into a trance in 1889.

In his trance he was taken to the spirit world and given a vision of a New Age for the Indian people, where generation after generation of Indians slain in combat would be reborn. It was a world in which buffalo had returned to the plains in their millions, and one where the white man had disappeared.

A ritualistic dance emerged that encompassed these new beliefs—the

## Seats of Power

**China** Qing Dynasty: Tongzhi (reigned 1861-1875); Guangxu (1875-1908).  
**France** Patrice de MacMahon (1873-1879); Jules Grevy (1879-1887); Sadie Carnot (1887-1894); Jean Casimir-Perier (1894-1895); Felix Faure (1895-1899); Emile Loubet (1899-1906).  
**Japan** Modern Japan: Meiji (reigned 1867-1912).  
**Kingdom of Great Britain** Victoria (reigned 1837-1901).  
**Portugal** Brigantine Dynasty: Luis I (reigned 1861-1889); Carlos (1889-1908).  
**Russia** Emperors: Alexander II (reigned 1855-1881); Alexander III (1881-1894); Nicholas II (1894-1917).  
**Spain** Bourbon Dynasty: Alfonso XII (reigned 1874-1885); Alfonso XIII (1886-1931).  
**Thailand** Chakri Dynasty: Rama V (reigned 1868-1910).  
**Zulu Nation** Cetshwayo kaMpande (reigned 1872-1884); Dinizulu kaCetshwayo (1884-1913).

Ghost Dance. It spread throughout the west, particularly among the recently defeated Indians of the Great Plains. The Sioux sent a delegation to visit Wovoka in 1889, and when they returned to their reservations, the dance began to take on militant overtones. Sioux apostles began talking of the day when they would be strong enough to wage all-out war on the white man, and they began fashioning sacred “ghost shirts,” which were believed to have the power to stop bullets.

This was the climate of fear and distrust that characterized the months leading up to December 28, 1890.

By November, about 3,000 Indians had assembled on a plateau at the northwest corner of Pine Ridge in an impregnable area known as “the stronghold.” Chief Big Foot of the Miniconjou Sioux was on his way there with 350 of his people to persuade the stronghold inhabitants to surrender. On December 28, unaware of this and believing Big Foot to be a Ghost Dancer, 500 men of the 7th Cavalry, under the command of Colonel James Forsyth, surrounded Big Foot. In addition, four

cannons capable of rapid fire, called Hotchkiss guns, were set up on the hills around his camp.

The next morning the soldiers entered the camp, demanding that the Sioux hand over their weapons. A medicine man called Yellow Bird objected. He exhorted the others to don their sacred shirts. “The bullets will not hurt you,” he was heard to say to the other men.

Another Miniconjou raised his rifle over his head, saying the rifle had cost him a lot of money and he was not prepared to part with it. A shot rang out, and immediately the soldiers began firing into the Indian encampment. An hour later the guns stopped.

Hundreds of Indian men, women, and children lay dead. Twenty-five soldiers were also killed, many by the indiscriminate shelling of their own Hotchkiss guns. Trails of blood trickled along the ground, heading out of camp toward the gulches.

Three days later, a burial party was sent to pull the frozen Indians out from under a blanket of snow. Many of the corpses were naked. Soldiers had stripped the “ghost shirts” from the dead to take home as souvenirs of the encounter.

Colonel Forsyth was relieved of his command at a court of inquiry, although he was later reinstated.

The massacre caused both hostile and friendly Sioux factions to unite, and on December 30, Sioux warriors under Kicking Bear attacked the 7th Cavalry along White Clay Creek. Casualties were minimal, and today Kicking Bear became the last Lakota warrior to surrender to the federal government.

## Dreyfus Receives Pardon from French President

**Paris, France, September 30, 1899:** Earlier this month President Emile Loubet pardoned Alfred Dreyfus following his

five-year battle to clear his name of the charge of having been a spy for Germany.

In 1894 Captain Alfred Dreyfus was sentenced to life imprisonment after being found guilty of the charges. A French spy in the German embassy had discovered a handwritten schedule detailing secret French documents. In the search for the traitor, suspicion fell upon Dreyfus, an Alsatian Jew, who strongly protested his innocence. Tried in-camera by a French court-martial and found guilty, he was deported to the French penal settlement of Devil’s Island, off the coast of French Guyana. The French army at this time was influenced heavily



Emile Zola



Charged with spying, Alfred Dreyfus stands trial at Rennes.

by monarchists and Catholics—and, it has been suggested, a degree of anti-Semitism as well.

There was a push to reopen the case in 1896, when evidence came to light that the culprit may in fact have been Major Ferdinand Esterhazy, who was deeply in debt. Esterhazy was tried and acquitted in a trial that took only minutes. Emile Zola, a supporter of Dreyfus, wrote an open letter to the president of the French republic claiming that the judges had received orders from the war office to acquit Esterhazy. Zola himself was then tried for libel and sentenced to jail, but he escaped to England. It was then revealed that much of the evidence against Dreyfus had been forged by a Colonel Henry of Army Intelligence.

After a second trial in 1899, Dreyfus was again found guilty “with extenuating circumstances” and sent back to Devil’s Island. The recent pardon has made it possible for him to return to Paris.

The so-called “Dreyfus Affair” had a major impact upon France as a nation, pitting radicals, republicans, and socialists against the church and army.



On February 15, 1898, while on a friendly visit to Cuba, the USS Maine was destroyed by an explosion.