



*Red Cloud*

## *Dakota Images*

Red Cloud, chief of the Oglalas, was born in 1822 at the forks of the Platte River. He became noted as a warrior early in life and opposed white men's encroachment on Indian land.

He refused to sign the proposed treaty of 1865 that would have given the government permission to open the Bozeman Road through the Powder River country and build forts to protect it. When Red Cloud learned that the government intended to proceed with the road in spite of the Indians, he defiantly stalked out of the meeting and began war. For two years, 1866-1868, he kept the trail and the forts, which were built with great difficulty, closed. His unrelenting campaign induced the government to yield, and with the treaty of 1868, the Bozeman Trail was closed and the three forts were abandoned.

Refusing to move from the north country to the Missouri River, Red Cloud camped instead at Whetstone. In 1870 the government allowed him to locate the agency, which bore his name, on the North Platte. Later, he moved his agency to White River in Nebraska. He became a persistent critic of the Indian agents. In 1881 Red Cloud demanded that Pine Ridge Agent V. T. McGillicuddy be removed. Seven years later, President Cleveland replaced McGillicuddy with Captain James M. Bell.

Red Cloud and other traditional leaders refused to sign the Treaty of 1889, which broke up the Great Sioux Reservation. As rations diminished and conditions grew worse, many Indians turned to the Messiah Craze. Although a Roman Catholic, Red Cloud gave tacit support to the Ghost Dance religion.

Red Cloud lived for almost nineteen years after the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre. He remained opposed to white civilization until his death on 10 December 1909 at his home in Pine Ridge.

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