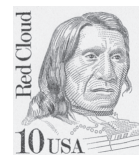


## This Day in History... December 10, 1909

### Death of Red Cloud

Oglala Lakota Indian warrior Red Cloud died on December 10, 1909.

Red Cloud's birth date is unknown, but it's believed he was born in 1822 near modern-day North Platte, Nebraska. Details concerning Red Cloud's early life are unclear. It is known that, in the tradition of the Lakota, his uncle, Old Chief Smoke, mentored Red Cloud. After Red Cloud's parents died, Old Chief Smoke took him in. Red Cloud went to war quite young, often against the Pawnee, Crow, Utes, and Shoshones. His leadership during these conflicts earned Red Cloud great prominence among his people.



*This stamp was issued in 1987 as part of the Great Americans Series.*

Gold was discovered in Montana during the 1860s. White settlers soon began to travel the Bozeman Trail, which went through Lakota territory, to reach these gold fields. Fearful of white incursions into his people's lands, Red Cloud frequently attacked these travelers. In response, the United States Army began to construct forts along the Bozeman Trail to provide protection. Fort Phil Kearny and Fort Reno were built in Wyoming, and Fort C.F. Smith was established in Montana. Red Cloud and his men were determined to stop the expansion into their territory.



*Chief Sitting Bull participated in Red Cloud's War.*

Starting in 1866, Red Cloud led the most successful war against the US ever waged by an Indian nation, Red Cloud's War. In December 1866, Lieutenant Colonel William Fetterman and 80 men were near Fort Phil Kearny in Wyoming when over 1,000 warriors attacked. All the soldiers were killed. The forts of the Bozeman Trail were kept under constant siege for two years. Red Cloud achieved victory in 1868, when the US government agreed to the Fort Laramie Treaty. This remarkable treaty resulted in the abandonment of the Bozeman forts and guaranteed the Lakota their lands in South Dakota (including the Black Hills), Montana, and Wyoming. Many historians believe Red Cloud is the only Native American to ever win a war against the United States.

In 1874, General Custer broke the treaty. Red Cloud chose not to fight along with Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, however. With the military defeat of the Lakota, Red Cloud worked with the US government to secure better treatment of his people instead. Red Cloud and his people moved to Pine Ridge Reservation. The chief made sure his people received food and supplies. He opposed the 1887 Dawes Act, which divided the land into tracts and sold the surplus to white settlers. Red Cloud once said, "They made us many promises, more than I can remember. But they kept but one – They promised to take our land... and they took it."

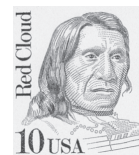
Red Cloud died on Pine Ridge Reservation on December 10, 1909. He was buried in a cemetery that now bears his name. During his lifetime, he was the most photographed Native American of the 19th century, with 128 known photos. The town of Red Cloud, Nebraska was named in his honor and he was inducted into the Nebraska Hall of Fame.

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