

Red Cloud

INDELIBLE IMAGES

CHIEF LOBBYIST

HE MADE LITTLE HEADWAY WITH PRESIDENT GRANT, BUT RED CLOUD WON OVER THE 19TH CENTURY'S GREATEST PHOTOGRAPHERS **BY ANNE BROACHE**



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION; NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHIVES

"You have not treated me as I ought to have been treated," the great Lakota chief (at 51, in an 1872 portrait by Alexander Gardner) told U.S. officials, adding: "But now I am for peace."

RED CLOUD started down the path of becoming the most photographed American Indian of the 19th century one spring morning in 1872, a few blocks from the White House. Before meeting with President Ulysses S. Grant, the Lakota chief agreed to sit for Mathew Brady, famed for his Civil War-era photographs and his portraits of the prominent. Two days later, Red Cloud posed at the nearby studio of Alexander Gardner, Brady's former assistant and one of the founders of American photojournalism. That session yielded a picture (left) that was a bestseller in its day and is one of the earliest, most striking photographs of an Indian chief in his prime.

Aside from the tribal blanket around his waist, Red Cloud's dress is simple. "My great-great-grandfather was both a leader and a warrior, but he was also a man," says Dorene Red Cloud, 34, an artist in Gardner, Massachusetts. The chief, she says, wanted Washington leaders to see him as a diplomat, "minus the glamour or pomp or circumstance of feathers and beads."

Not much is known about Red Cloud's visit to Gardner's studio, says Frank Goodyear III, a curator of photographs for the National Portrait Gallery and author of the 2003 book *Red Cloud: Photographs of a Lakota Chief*. Gardner made at least four different plates, and the session was arranged by a wealthy land speculator named William Blackmore, who was collecting photographs for a museum about Native peoples he'd opened in 1867 in his hometown of Salisbury, England.

The Scottish-born Gardner, once a

Glasgow newspaperman, had been living in Washington since 1856. He started as Brady's assistant and occasional bookkeeper, but launched his own studio in 1863, after what D. Mark Katz, in his *Witness to an Era: The Life and Photographs of Alexander Gardner*, calls an "amicable" break with Brady. In 1865, Gardner published a volume of frontline Civil War scenes, *Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the War*. He also won recognition for his images of Abraham Lincoln and other leading figures. He made his mark not with technical innovations but by "affecting public awareness," Katz writes, whether through "authentic images of the horrors of the battlefield" or mug shots of the Lincoln assassination conspirators. After the war, Gardner briefly went West, where he documented treaty signings between Indians and U.S. officials. Gardner retired in 1879 and died three years later at age 61.

The best-known Indian leader of his time, Red Cloud had become a warrior in clashes with the U.S. military in the Northern Plains. In 1868, he reluctantly signed the Fort Laramie Treaty, which reaffirmed the Lakota's hunting rights, sectioned off the Great Sioux Reservation and required the government to remove military forts.

But the government didn't hold up its end of the deal, and even built a new fort on Lakota soil. After meeting with Grant the first time, in 1870, a frustrated Red Cloud was quoted as telling Secretary of the Interior Jacob Cox that the treaty was "all lies." He added: "We have been driven far enough; we want what we ask for." Officials, meanwhile, had hoped to wangle from Red Cloud access to the Lakota's gold-rich Black Hills (which they obtained years later). During the chief's second visit to Grant, in 1872, Red Cloud sensed more respect, and as a kind of diplomatic gesture, Goodyear says, he agreed to have his picture taken.

In years to come, Red Cloud would journey from his home in Pine Ridge,



"My heart is heavy," said an elderly Red Cloud (in a 1905 Edward Curtis photo).

South Dakota, to Washington eight more times and hobnob with officials from three other administrations, frequently on his own initiative. Photographers clamored to capture him on film, and the 128 known photographs of the chief trace his quest to hang onto influence while most people believed American Indian culture would go the way of the dinosaurs. In photographs from the 1880s, Red Cloud sports short hair and tailored suits, which he had

hoped would help win over U.S. leaders. Those efforts proved futile, and he let his hair grow. The final portraits show a frail, white-haired, nearly blind old man, seemingly wistful for his tribe's glory days. He died in 1909 at age 88.

But at Gardner's studio in 1872, Red Cloud fixes his gaze directly forward—a "strikingly modern" view; Goodyear says, that distinguishes this image from the rest: "He's at the top of his game as a diplomat and tribal leader. You can sense this is not a defeated man." ◉



Gardner, circa 1860

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Jacobs, a trail guide who had come west in 1852, they began searching for the most direct route, which would also have plenty of water and grazing land along the way¹⁶.

The route they chose did have those assets but it also had one major drawback. It passed right through some valuable Sioux hunting grounds. Bozeman's family history for the past two hundred years had involved moving onto Indian lands. The spirit of Manifest Destiny, supported by his past experiences and perhaps, by the fact that this land had never been the permanent home to any tribe, led him to route the Trail through the hunting ground. The presence of gold and extremely fertile land were magical motivators for expansion and would cause people to take greater risks to obtain it. The larger the possible rewards, the more a person is willing to invest in trying to attain them.

Red Cloud, or Makhpiya Luta, a Sioux Indian, was born around 1822, between the Black Hills and the Missouri River in what is now South Dakota. The Sioux were a confederacy of tribes who began joining forces in the mid 1600's to give themselves strength in the battles with neighboring tribes in Minnesota. Increase in Native American populations were creating greater demands on the prime hunting grounds. By 1750, some of the Sioux had been forced out of Minnesota by the Omaha and Iowa tribes and moved west to the Black Hills. Other tribes were already there. The Sioux battled them for decades and finally gained control of the Black Hills by 1794, driving out the Kiowa and Crow but allowing the Cheyenne to stay. The other Sioux bands soon came from Minnesota to join them¹⁷.

¹⁶ Smith, Phyllis. *Bozeman and the Gallatin Valley, A History*. Helena: Falcon Press. 1996

¹⁷ Callahan, Kevin. "History & Leaders of the Oglala Lakota Sioux",

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/3976/Leaders1.html>.

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The U. S. government began entering into a series of treaties with various tribes promising protection for the tribes in exchange for their allowing travel through their land and giving the U.S. authority to regulate commerce within the Indian lands. It also called for the Indians to recognize that they lived within the U. S. territorial limits and acknowledge their supremacy. As the tribes became more knowledgeable about these treaties they began to find many flaws within them and found that some actually contained provisions which were in violation of previous treaties, such as the clause in the 1851 Laramie Treaty which gave the U. S. rights to establish roads, military posts and other posts within the territory. The existing treaty allowed roads, but only for passage through the territory, not for the purpose of bringing people in to settle.

Red Cloud had proven himself a great warrior from the age of 16 in territorial wars with the Pawnees, Crows, Utes and Shoshones. In the 1860's, he proved himself to be a powerful leader of the Sioux as he began contesting these treaty provisions. As his protests increased, so did the number of emigrants to the area. John Bozeman began leading emigrant wagon trains in from the east and many decided to go into farming or business in the new town of Bozeman City, in the Gallatin Valley of Montana. There were still many heading for the mines as well. He was working hard to see that all the elements needed to create a successful city were being built. Hotels, banks, churches, schools, a variety of businesses, homes and farms were rapidly being established²¹.

Emigrants came in increasingly greater numbers as did the Indian attacks on them. Militia forces among the settlers began forming and attacking Indian villages, killing women and children as well as warriors. The Sioux claimed that the treaties allowed roads for the passage of emigrants through the Indian territory, but the Bozeman Trail violated this because it was bringing permanent settlers into the mining fields of Wyoming. The Sioux stepped up their attacks and the

²¹ Burlingame, Merrill G., *John Bozeman, Montana Trailmaker*

ghting reached a peak in 1865. As the Civil War ended and troops became available to send west, General Patrick O'Conner brought 3,000 soldiers into the Powder River Basin with the order to: "Attack and kill every male Indian over twelve years of age"²².

X Red Cloud united all the Plains Indian tribes in a joint effort to close the Bozeman Trail and the military forts guarding it. Their all-out war became known as Red Cloud's War. In 1866 Red Cloud and Crazy Horse lured the troops at Fort Phil Kearny into a chase of a handful of Indians. The soldiers were trapped in an isolated area, completely surrounded by Indian warriors who proceeded to wipe out the entire force²³.

In 1867 John Bozeman wrote to the Governor of Montana saying that unless additional military protection was forthcoming, many citizens were prepared to leave the area. When Bozeman was killed in April of that year, even though it was not by Sioux Indians, the entire area panicked. The Trail had lost its strongest and most effective advocate²⁴. The formidable combined Indian forces maintained pressure on the military until the U. S. sued for peace. It was the only time that U. S. military forces had been totally defeated by an Indian leader²⁵.

The 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty was signed which resulted in closing of the Bozeman Trail and the military forts in the Black Hills and Big Horn Territory. It created the Black Hills Sioux Indian Reservation and affirmed that the Black Hills were Sioux land. In the years to come, the Sioux lands were reduced and the U.S. began restricting Indian travel outside the reservation. This

²² Callahan, Kevin. "History & Leaders of the Oglala Lakota Sioux"

²³ Welker, Kevin. "Red Cloud, as Remembered by Ohiyesa (Charles A. Eastman),(Feb. 10, 1996) <http://www.indians.org/welker/redcloud.html>.

²⁴ Burlingame, Merrill G., *John M. Bozeman, Montana Trailmaker*. Bozeman: Museum of the Rockies, 1971.

²⁵ Callahan, Kevin. "History & Leaders of the Oglala Lakota Sioux"

eliminated the Sioux's ability to continue as hunters and forced them into farming. A calculated effort on the part of the U.S. to effectively wipe out every aspect of the Indian was undertaken²⁶. They became increasingly restrictive and cruel to the Sioux. As had happened decades earlier with the Cherokee, the United States government was determined not only to subdue the tribe, but also to destroy their culture. If the United States had been a more mature and secure nation, perhaps it would have been more tolerant and less threatened by different philosophies and cultures.

In 1870, Red Cloud and a group of Plains Indian Chiefs and leaders went to Washington to take their pleas for help straight to the President and the people. It was a valuable trip for both sides. The Indians were astonished by the tremendous number of people who lived in the east and by their buildings and technology. At once they recognized the overpowering strength of the white man and knew that fighting anymore would be futile²⁷. During the trip, Red Cloud was invited to speak at Cooper Union in New York. He was greeted by a packed audience as he brought his pleas for help to them. The entire audience was moved by his words. He developed very influential allies, who began advocating a better treatment of the Indians by the United States.²⁸ The Chiefs who went on the trip left the east determined to establish peaceful relationships with the U.S. When they saw the overwhelming power of the country, they lost all hope in their ability to defeat them. They somehow forgot that just two years earlier they had defeated them in several battles. When a person or group loses all hope, they lose their aggression²⁹. The steady controlling, but cruel treatment the Americans gave the Indians did the same thing. Obviously, there was a more powerful means of accomplishing the same goal. Also, if the Americans had

²⁶ Collier, John. *Indians of the Americas: The Long Hope*

²⁷ Paul, R. Eli, ed. *Autobiography of Red Cloud: War Leader of the Oglalas*. Helena: Montana Historical Society Press. 1998.

²⁸ "I represent the whole Sioux Nation", excerpts from Red Cloud's 1870 Cooper Union speech in New York. <http://members.aol.com/circonre/1.html>

²⁹ Aronson, Elliott, *The Social Animal*, San Francisco, W, H, Freeman & Co. 1976

been less threatened by the Native Americans and had instead tried to understand them, perhaps that would also have made them feel less aggressive.

Manifest Destiny served to give Americans a sense of divine mission in their settling of the country. If they doubted the morality of their actions, they could reassure themselves by knowing it was their Christian duty. Their sense of destiny to spread over the entire continent was shaped by the need they felt to protect their borders from invasion of another country from the north, south or west. The actions may have been directed by a deep, subconscious feeling of self-protection. It could be argued that had it not been America, the Indian lands would have eventually fallen to another country. The Americans were in the habit of placing the blame on the Indians for being unable to hold onto their land. There may be some justification in that. While there are plenty of excuses and even psychological basis for the American's cruel treatment of the Indians, it will always be one of the darkest periods in our history and will effect the way Americans are able to view themselves. It may have been the expedient and even tactically correct method of addressing the problem. One could argue that Indian tribes had engaged in war with each other for rights to the same land that Americans later fought them for.

Determining the value of Manifest Destiny in the shaping of America depends on the evaluator's opinion of the importance and worth of the country which developed. It was indeed an act of aggression by one nation on several others but each person must compare what was lost to what was gained. Issues that are similar in nature but to a less violent degree are happening everyday. In present day Bozeman, Montana the longtime residents are feeling invaded by a new wave of emigration. This time it is from wealthy Californians who are filling the land with dense subdivisions of huge houses. Traffic has, for the first time, become a real problem. The new land use patterns are permanently altering the pristine environment. The qualities that the

Red Cloud

- 21-22 Red Cloud was a cousin to American Horse, Ogala Sioux Chief. Red Cloud a member of "A very wild band" of Indians. War in 1866.
- 89 American Horse accompanied Red Cloud to Washington several times. Frontiersman Geminien P. Beauvais also made a trip with Red Cloud to Washington in 1870
- p.117 Another frontiersman Joseph Bissonette also accompanied Red Cloud to Washington as an interpreter in 1875.
- p.312 Red Cloud was a friend to well known Frontiersman & Cowboy James Henry Cook (a descendant of Captain Jmes Cook). Red Cloud and other Sioux Native Americans visited him.
- p.341 Crazy Horse fought with Red Cloud in several wars against the thg whites from 1865-66.
- p.429 Red Cloud gave a weary Northern Cheyenne Chief Dull Knife (& family) a place to live after they had escaped from an Indian Territory in 1879.
- p.703 Inkpaduta, a Sioux leader worked with the Red Cloud operation along the Bozeman Trail.
- p.772 Red Cloud and another Sioux Chief, Spotted Tail, sent a petition to President Grant on behalf of frontiersman Toussaint Kensler in regard to a murder he was suspected of, trying to prove his innounce.

- p.862 Little Wolf and his people wintered with Red Clouds Sioux after escaping with Dull Knife from an Indian Territory.
- p.905 March 10, 1879 Red Cloud had a confrontation with Indian Agent Valentine T. McGillicuddy and the two became bitter enemies.
- p.1104 Leon Francis Palladay accompanied Red Cloud to Washington as an interpreter in 1875 and again in 1877.