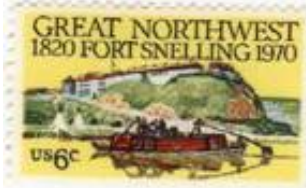


# The American Indian



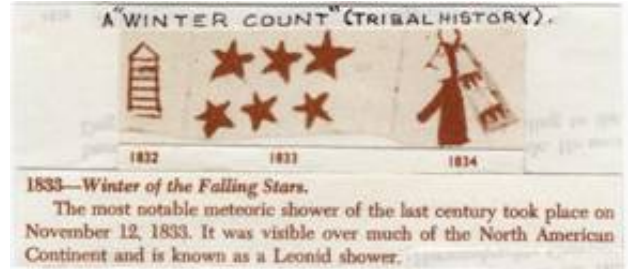
## HERO OR POSTAGE STAMP VILLAIN by David Herryty

- Recently the USA Post Office issued three small stamps each depicting a famous Sioux Indian. One was Red Cloud, who was he, and what did he do to gain such an exalted position? The early life of Red Cloud (*known as Mak Pia Luta in his native tongue*) is shrouded in mysteries. Even the account written by a full blooded Sioux Dr. Eastman, is riddled with absurdities. Old time Indian informants said ~whatever they thought the interviewer wanted to hear, the better the presents offered, the taller the story they told. Such fanciful stories can be checked against Sioux tribal historian Winter Counts" - such pictographs of the 1860 - 70's era depict Red Cloud with a red cloud above his head. One



explanation for this is that from a distance his followers red blankets, looked like a red cloud, on the other hand scholars have pointed out that the 1821 - 22 "Winter Count" (*his supposed year of birth*) depicts a fiery meteorite, an event recorded at Fort Snelling on the night of 20th September 1822. Sadly the "Winter Count" of 1833 shows a similar event, but this time involving shooting stars. However, Sioux names were earned or based upon dreams experienced during a boy's manhood initiation ordeal,

rather than events at birth. The truth is, no one really knows. Most Indians agree that by 1865 Red Cloud was not a paramount chief but a "Shirt Wearer" or Head Soldier of the Oglala Sioux "Bad Face" band. This is where he would probably have remained, lost to history and philately. The discovery- of gold in Montana changed everything, catapulting Red Cloud from obscurity into the pages of history. In the 1884 Senate documents, First Session, references are made to a profiteering "Indian Ring" which had pressurised Washington into offering the Sioux lavish annuities, which the "Ring" could siphon off in return for a peace treaty; permitting free passage for pioneers and gold prospectors and permission to build three forts to protect the Montana Road (*better known as the Bozeman Trail.*) The Peace Commissioners Meeting with the Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho was plunged into disarray when Red Cloud stormed out of the meeting taking 2,000 hostile warriors with him. Nevertheless the three forts were built, and soon after, the wagons began to roll. Red Cloud began to probe here and raid there. On 6th December 1866 he struck a devastating blow. Colonel Fetterman's eighty one men were ambushed and massacred only four miles from Fort Phil Keamy. This paralysed all traffic on the road indefinitely, and Fort C.F. Smith had to be abandoned. The U.S. Government



shamefacedly admitted it had been militarily defeated, and was forced to cede vast tracts of Wyoming, Montana and the Dakotas as the price of peace. Although nobody told the Indians, the Treaty was never ratified. The "Indian Rings" corrupt politicians saw to that. It has been claimed that this was the root cause of the Custer Massacre ten years later. Red Cloud inadvisably allowed himself to be persuaded to visit Washington, as a result of which he lost much of his influence, which was now confined to Indians on or around the "Red Cloud" Agency. In July 1894 he was arrested and fined \$66 for killing game out of season. He had no money, but two ponies from his herd settled the matter. In 1903 he abdicated his

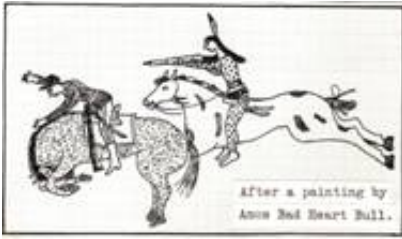
Chieftain ship. He passed away on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1909. Latterly he had embraced the Catholic faith and was buried with the full rites of the Catholic Church at Holy Rosary Mission. He is reliably reported to have said of himself " *I as many others have done before me, have made mistakes in not doing something I should have done and what I should not have done.* " **The thoughts of a very wise man indeed.**

## THE GREATEST PATRIOT by David Herryty

- Part 2 of a United States Indian Stamp Trilogy, Examines Crazy Horse (Tashunca Witco.) He was born a member of the 'Hunkpatila' band of the Ogallala Sioux about 1842, near present day Rapid City in the Black Hills of Dakota. Although photographs said to be of him exist, he was never photographed, nor did he ever sign a Peace Treaty. During this thirty-five year life, only the last four months were spent on a reservation, even there he avoided contact with the white man whenever possible.

During his manhood initiation ordeal, he is said to have experienced a spirit dream in which he rode unharmed through a storm of arrows and bullets, while his own people tried to hold him back, but he shook them off. During his lifetime he had no fear of enemies, believing that only the Sioux could cause his death.

In 1865 his courage and integrity earned him the honoured position of 'Shirt Wearer' (Head Soldier). As was the Sioux custom, Crazy Horse offered his worldly possessions for his childhood sweetheart, but was outbid by No Water, a 'Bad Face' sub chief. A tug of war ensued for No Water's new bride, ending in Crazy Horse being shot in the jaw. To avoid reprisals, No Water fled to Red Cloud's 'Bad Face' village on the reservation. The affair outraged the 'Bad Faces' and lost Crazy Horse his honoured 'Shirt Wearer' position. This however did not deter his personal following of one thousand 'Hunkpatila'. They formed a new warrior society the 'Hailstones; recognising Crazy Horse as its 'Shirt Wearer'.



In 1874 gold was discovered in the Black Hills , sacred to the Sioux. The profiteering 'Indian Ring' claimed by

General Custer to include Orville Grant brother of the President, lobbied President Grant into ordering Generals Sherman and Sheridan to mount a campaign in 1876 to subjugate the Sioux, after which they were to be moved eastward from their hunting grounds and reservations, to the Missouri River .

During eight days in June 1876 Crazy Horse played a major role in the defeat of General Crook and the Custer massacre, after which Sitting Bull wisely fled to Canada . Crazy Horse was forced to surrender on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1877 after being shelled by General Miles.



Although the 'Old Man' chiefs leading the various reservation bands respected Crazy Horse's bravery, they feared how his popularity amongst the warriors would affect their own position. Crazy Horse was now nearing the point where he might be elevated from Head Soldier to 'Old Man' chief. Urged on by No Water the chiefs spread wild rumours about Crazy Horse's intentions. They then fuelled the fire by encouraging a half-breed to misinterpret statements made by Crazy Horse and his blood brother Touch the Clouds. By the time that Touch the Clouds convinced General Lee of the falsehoods that were circulating, it was too late. General Sheridan author of "The Only Good Indian is a Dead One" seized the golden opportunity to remove his most dangerous potential objector to the planned reservation closures. He peremptorily ordered Crazy Horse's arrest and incarceration in the Dry Tortugas, Florida . On 5<sup>th</sup> September 1877 as partly prophesied in his spirit dream, the arrest ended in a wild melee with the Sioux Indian police holding his arms while a soldier bayoneted him. He died that night.

In late October, while the Sioux were being sent eastward to the Missouri , the Hunkpatila' charged through their escorting soldiers fleeing north to rejoin Sitting Bull in Canada . Along the way they secretly placed Crazy Horse's bones in a cairn at his birthplace in the Black Hills . Despite offers of monetary gain not one 'Hunkpatila' ever revealed the site of his final resting place.

In 1934 a Government Agency belatedly erected a Monument on the site of his death. His life had been the stuff of legend, authors and Hollywood Directors. In the 1950's Rock Hudson and Victor Mature both starred in films about him. Latterly a huge representation of Crazy Horse has been carved in the Black Hills .

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