Route 66 Postcards

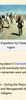
Indian Wars List and Timeline

Sioux Chief Red Cloud

Sioux Chief Spotted Tail

Sioux Chief Sitting Bull

Sioux Chief Crazy Horse



Sioux Chief Gall

Sioux Chief Rain-in-the-Face

Sioux Chief Two Moons

Sioux Chief Dull Knife

Sioux Chief Little Wolf

Sioux Chief Big Foot

Sioux Chief Two Strike

Sioux Chief Crow King

Sioux Chief Lone Horn

Sioux Chief Pizi

Sioux Chief Iron Hawk

Sioux Chief Iron Shell

Sioux Chief Red Dog

Surrender of the Modoc Indians, 1873, Frank Leslies Illustrated Newspaper

December 28, 1872 – Salt River Canyon Battle – Also called the Skeleton Cave Battle, the U.S. Army won its most striking victory in the long history of Apache warfare at this site in Arizona. About 75 Indians died, and most of the rest were captured.

March 27, 1873 – Battle of Turret Peak – Fought in south-central Arizona, it was one of the pivotal fights that broke the backs of the Apache and Yavapai in their efforts to resist white encroachment into their lands.

1874-1875 – Red River War – Occurring in northwestern Texas, William T. Sherman led a campaign of more than 14 battles against the Arapaho, Comanche, Cheyenne, and Kiowa tribes, who eventually surrendered.

June 27, 1874 – Second Battle of Adobe Walls – A combined force of some 700 Comanche, Cheyenne, Kiowa, and Arapaho warriors, led by Comanche Chief Quanah Parker and Isa-tai, attacked the buffalo camp at Adobe Walls in the Texas Panhandle. The hunters held the site, and the Indians retreated, but it soon led to the Red River War.

Adobe Walls, Texas

July 4, 1874 – Bates Battle – In a narrow valley Hot Springs County, Wyoming, an Arapaho encampment was attacked by U.S. Army forces under Captain Alfred E. Bates. Bates reported his losses were four killed and five or six wounded, and 25 Arapaho were killed and 100 wounded. Other reports indicate the Arapaho suffered as few as ten casualties.

September 28, 1874 – Battle of Palo Duro Canyon – Cheyenne, Comanche, and Kiowa warriors engaged elements of the U.S. 4th Cavalry Regiment led by Colonel Ranald S. Mackenzie in Palo Duro Canyon, Texas.

1876-1877 – Black Hills War – Also called the Sioux War of 1876, the Lakota under Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse fought the U.S. after repeated violations of the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie.

March 1876 – Battle of Powder River – The opening battle of the Black Hills War, between the U.S. Army and the Sioux and Cheyenne on the Powder River in Montana.

June 17, 1876 – Battle of Rosebud – The Lakota under Sitting Bull clashed with the U.S. Army column moving to reinforce Custer's 7th Cavalry.

Battle of the Little Bighorn by C.M. Russell

June 25-26, 1876 – Battle of the Little Bighorn – Sioux and Cheyenne under the leadership of Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse defeated the 7th Cavalry under George Armstrong Custer.

July 17, 1876 – Battle at Warbonnet Creek – Three weeks after Custer's defeat at the Battle of the Little Bighorn, the Fifth U.S. Cavalry skirmished with Cheyenne Indians from the Red Cloud Agency in northwest Nebraska.

September 8, 1876 – Battle of Slim Buttes – Captain Anson Mills' Third Cavalry troopers attacked the Sioux village of American Horse in South Dakota. American Horse was killed in the ambush.

November 25, 1876 – Dull Knife Fight – After the Battle of the Little Bighorn the previous summer, the U.S. Military began retaliatory campaigns. Colonel Ranald S. Mackenzie's 4th Cavalry surprised Dull Knife's winter camp in Wyoming, killing 25 Indians.

1877 – Nez Perce War – Occurring in Oregon, Idaho, and Montana, the Nez Perce were fighting to keep their home in Wallowa Valley. Chief Joseph retreated from the 1st U.S. Cavalry through Idaho, Yellowstone Park, and Montana after a group of Nez Perce attacked and killed a group of Anglo settlers in early 1877. They surrendered near the border to Nelson Miles' soldiers.

August 29, 1877 – Battle of Big Hole – One of a series of engagements between U.S. troops and the fleeing Nez Perce under Chief Joseph in southwestern Montana.

1878 – Bannock War – Elements of the 21st U.S. Infantry, 4th U.S. Artillery, and 1st U.S. Cavalry engaged the natives of southern Idaho, including the Bannock and Paiute, when the tribes threatened rebellion in 1878, dissatisfied with their land allotments.

1878-1879 – Cheyenne War – A conflict between the United States armed forces and a small group of Cheyenne families.

September 27, 1878 – Battle of Punished Woman Fork – Chiefs Dull Knife and Little Wolf of the Northern Cheyenne led their people in a rebellion and flight from confinement and starvation in Indian Territory to their homelands in the north. The Cheyenne made their final stand in Scott County, Kansas, fighting against the U.S. Cavalry.

September 30, 1878 – Last Cheyenne Raid – Cheyenne ambushed Decatur County, Kansas. A running fight with white settlers occurred. In the end, 17 settlers were killed in the ambush.

1879 – White River War – The war was fought between Ute Indians and the U.S. Army Buffalo Soldiers near the area of the White River that passes through both the states of Colorado and Utah.

January 8, 1879 – Ft Robinson Massacre – Northern Cheyenne under Dull Knife attempt to escape from confinement in Fort Robinson, Nebraska; about fifty survive.

May-August, 1879 – Sheepeater War – On May 1, 1879, three detachments of soldiers pursued the Idaho Western Shoshone throughout central Idaho during the last campaign in the Pacific Northwest.

September 29, 1879 – Meeker Massacre – One of the most violent expressions of Indian resentment toward the reservation system, Ute Indians attacked the White River Indian Agency in Rio Blanca County, Colorado, burning the buildings and killing Indian Agent, Nathan C. Meeker, and nine employees.

September 29 – October 5, 1879 – Battle of Milk Creek – Following the Meeker Massacre, Ute Indians ambushed a column of 150 troops on the northern edge of the White River Reservation in Moffat County, Colorado.

April 28, 1880 – Alma Massacre – Settlers killed by Apache led by Victorio at Alma, New Mexico. Likewise, on December 19, 1885, an officer and four enlisted men of the 8th Cavalry Regiment were killed by Apache near Alma, New Mexico.

September 1879 – November 1880 – Ute War – On September 29, 1879, some 200 men, elements of the 4th U.S. Infantry and 5th U.S. Cavalry under the command of Major T. T. Thornburgh, were attacked and besieged in Red Canyon by 300 to 400 Ute warriors. Thornburgh's group was rescued by forces of the 5th and U.S. 9th Cavalry Regiment in early October, but not before significant loss of life had occurred. The Utes were finally pacified in November 1880.

August 30, 1881 – Battle of Cibeque – When Apache shaman, Noch-del-klinne (the prophet) began to teach dances and rites similar to the ghost dance, he was arrested, and fighting erupted along Cibecue Creek, Arizona.

July 17, 1882 – Battle of Big Dry Wash – The battle of Big Dry Wash was the last major fight with hostile Apache in Arizona Territory and marked the end of an era.

September 4, 1886 – Skeleton Canyon – Geronimo and less than 40 Apache surrendered to Brigadier General Nelson Miles at Skeleton Canyon, Arizona, marking the end of the Apache Wars.

1890–1891 – Ghost Dance War – An armed conflict between the U.S. government and Native Americans that resulted from a religious movement called the Ghost Dance. The conflict included the Wounded Knee Massacre and the Pine Ridge Campaign.

Paiute Ghost Dance

November 1890 – January 1891 – Pine Ridge Campaign – Numerous unresolved grievances led to the last major conflict with the Sioux. A lopsided engagement that involved almost half the infantry and cavalry of the Regular Army caused the surviving warriors to lay down their arms and retreat to their reservations in January 1891.

December 29, 1890 – Wounded Knee Massacre – Sitting Bull's half-brother, Big Foot, and some 200 Sioux were killed by the U.S. 7th Cavalry. only fourteen days before, Sitting Bull had been killed with his son Crow Foot at Standing Rock Agency in a gun battle with a group of Indian police that had been sent by the American government to arrest him.

October 5, 1898 – Battle of Leech Lake – Considered the last "Indian War," an uprising of Chippewa occurred when one of their tribe was arrested on Lake Leech in northern Minnesota.

Compiled by Kathy Weiser-Alexander/Legends of America, updated June 2021.

Also See:

Frontier Skirmishes between the Pioneers & the Indians

Military Campaigns of the Indian Wars

Native American Timelines

Indian Wars of the Frontier West by Emerson Hough

Copyright © 2021 **Legends of America**. All Rights Reserved

AN ELITE CAFEMEDIA PUBLISHER