Running Water Winter Count

Artist Dawn Little Sky (Lakota), who lived on the Pine Ridge Reservation, created this modern chronology of events impacting the lives of James Cook and Red Cloud and the place called Agate Fossil Beds. Events are portrayed yearly from the birth of Red Cloud in 1821 until the death of James Cook in 1942. Many of these events were taken from actual historic Lakota winter counts, such as those of Whiteman Stands In Sight, American Horse, Lone Dog and Blue Thunder. Plains Indians used winter counts to keep track of their history, picking one event each winter to stand for the year's activities. Such events were kept in memory and painted on hides to help the story teller's recollection.

Earth Forms. Dates of origin vary among scientists and theologians. Symbol includes earth, air, fire and water spinning clockwise.

- 225-65 million years ago. Dinosaurs rule the earth. Their remains have not yet been found in western Nebraska, but occur further west and north. Stegosaurus remains were found in Colorado and Wyoming.
- 20-19 million years ago. Various animals died during a long drought at isolated waterholes, including Agate. In what will become the Great Plains of North America. The half circle symbol at the top means "gone under" or death.
- 10-11 thousand years ago. Early human hunters killed elephants and ancient buffalo (bison) and camped at preferred sites throughout the plains.
- 1492. An Italian, Cristoforo Colombo (Columbus), sails from Spain and discovers many people already living in the Americas (mistakenly thought to be India).
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- 1759. Wicablesahan waniyetu (they scatter winter). Different bands of the Sioux confederacy were forced to winter in the Nebraska Sandhills.
- 1765. Sunka wakan natan ahi (dog mysterious charging they arrive). WId horses were seen charging through camp. These horses charged the camp like warriors. It was remarkable and included in wintercount.
- 1768. lyeska kici zapi (mixed blood they fight). Fur traders and members of the Oglala tribe fought other tribes in the region.
- 1775. Standing Bull returns home with a tree from the Black Hills (tree was cedar from where the thunders build their nests).
- 1776. Kiklela Hi (Goes Comes Home arrives). A white fur trader visits the Oglala for the first time.
- 1805. Lewis and Clark hold a council with friendly Lakota while exploring the upper Missouri River and took much com.
- 1817. Permanent log trading posts are built in Lakota country.
- 1821/22. Red Cloud was born near the forks of the Platte Rivers and a roaring shooting party kills 10 Crow in Montana on Wren Creek. Hair style and dress indicate war party kills 10 Crow in Montana on Wren Creek.
- 1826/27. Six Lakota die from eating the rotten carcass of a buffalo. Upside down figures found in western Nebraska, but occur further west and north. Stegosaurus remains were found in Colorado and Wyoming.
- 1829/30. Ite glega wa aksija (Face Spotted he retains him). Spotted Face stabbed his brother from horse and broke his neck while running buffalo.
- 1830/31. Trader Red Lake brought goods in wagons for the first time.
- 1831/32. Red Lake was killed by some buffalo (buffalo earth around carrying they went). Several tribes united to form a confederation to repel foreign invaders.
- 1833/34. Wicanpi okicamna (star it storms). Shooting stars like snowflakes in a storm. Different bands of the Sioux confederacy were forced to winter in the Nebraska Sandhills.
- 1836/37. Caga akicin in pi (ice they fight on). Oglalas battle Pawnee across the frozen Missouri River.
- 1841/42. First large wagon train (the Bidwell/Bartleson party) travels to Oregon territory.
- 1844/45. Kangi Bloka ahi ktepi (Crow male arrived they killed him). He Crow and Assiniboine speak the same as Lakota with slight difference.
- 1846/47. The United States and Mexico go to war over the territories of Texas, New Mexico and California. These areas join the United States after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848.
- 1848/49. Ft. Laramie created to protect Oregon Trail traffic, including a flood of new gold seekers to California.
- 1854/55. Chief Conquering Bear and Lt. Grattan and his command are killed east of Ft. Laramie.
- 1856/57. Lt. Warren surveys the Black Hills and a route along the Niobrara River for a possible supply trail to Ft. Laramie.
- 1858/59. Tasinga gt tepi (robe brown they killed him). Crow Chief Yellow Robe is killed by a white trader.
- 1859/60. Red Cloud's house accidentally blown up by gun powder.
- 1860/61. American Civil War begins in dispute over slavery and fair trade.
- 1864/65. The Colorado militia massacred a peaceful camp of Cheyennes and Arapahe (Arapaho) in the Sand Creek Massacre. Scalps of Indians were paraded in Denver to cheering crowds.
- 1866/67. Wasicu opan winge wicaktepi (white man hundred they killed them). Warriors killed 10 Crow in Montana on Wren Creek. Hair style and dress indicate scalp war party kills 10 Crow in Montana on Wren Creek.
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- 1868/69. The Union Pacific railroad is finished across the continent.
- 1870/71. Red Cloud finally signs after the Bozeman Trail is designated. A "public pleasuring ground" following the Hayden Survey which documented its natural wonders.
- 1878/79. Yellowstone National Park was created by an act of Congress.
1877/78. The temporary Red Cloud reservation is moved from the North Platte River to the Big Horn Creek in the Latahada's designated reservation in South Dakota. The military soon follow and build Ft. Robinson nearby to discourage incidents, such as the killing of agency clerk, Frank Appleton, in February 1878.

1877/78, 1879. A military occupation is begun at the mouth of the Big Horn in Wyoming, marking the presence of gold and prompting the government to negotiate for the removal of this land for military reservation. The O.C. Marsh leads an expedition into the White River Badlands looking for fossil finders. No bones are found.

1877/78. Red Cloud goes to Washington to complain of rotten beef rations. President Hayes appoints Commissioner of Indian Affairs to investigate the problems.

1877/78. Many Lakota were imprisoned in the Georgia State Penitentiary for a decade. No Indian is released in the same year. The monument is never finished.

1877/14. Canyon Wall Wells, a mixed blood also known as Gift Pipe, died. He was the Agency Farmer Aide for many years.

1875/14. Sundance went on his first hunt. A bad prairie fire killed many horses and destroyed many scattered camps. Only part of the Lakota and Gros Ventre returned.

1876. Secretary of the Interior passes an act to permit the leasing of Indian lands for 10 years.

1876. Sapa on owaywas huwasha. The Catholic school at St. Francis on the Rosebud Reservation burned down.

1876/77, 1877/78. Lakota fighting continued in the Badlands and south for soldiers in World War I.

1877/18. Saka yi te ya wa mu kinya. The Ogala raised money from their arts and crafts and other projects for the Red Cross. One boy rode an outlaw horse and donated it to the Red Cross.

1878/19. James Cook's son John, Buffalo Bill's daughter Irma, Red Cloud's son Jack and many others died during a Spanish influenza epidemic.

1880/89. White Cloud (Ute) (winter) of hardships. In deep snow and bitter cold caused great hardships.

2020/21. Lakota wawaksyapi twitcas yin on paps. The mixed blood sheriff of Bennett County, Montana, was shot and killed.

2021/22. Nikulaka mokiic oni (White Head came on land business). Government negotiator James McGilvrae came to Pine Ridge to encourage individual Ogala to apply for fee simple ownership of their land without any federal protections in the past.

2023/23. Henry Stirnigk Bear and other Lakota die a formal claim against the United States for Kohl's wrongfull seizure of their sacred Black Hills. The 1911 Black Hills Council had first proposed such action.

2024/24. With the encouragement of western writers B.A. Brininstool, rancher James H. Cook publishes his autobiographical book Fifty Years on the Old Frontier through Yale University Press.

2024/25. The Indian Citizenship Act grants privileges to all, although some states continue to prohibit voting until 1957.

2025/26. Harold Cook investigates a possible human fossil on Snake Creek.

2026/27. Ivan knows where to. Good Weasel, veterans of the Carter battle, died.

2027/28. Lakota men and women talk to My People the last time, as they look back on the history andPie, una historia acerca own whose history is written by Indians themselves, about their adaptations to white society.

2028/29. The Independent Ethics Board issues a scathing report, The Problem of Indian Corruption in the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The report, later vigorously criticized past Indian policy and documented the sad condition of most American Indians.

2029/30. Stock market crash leads to a bank panic and the great (financial) Depression over the next decade in the 1930's.

2030/31. Dirty money and earmark failure. Pine Ridge Reservation holds a sundance to allieviate misery; food cooked in an old style pan with hot rocks.

2031/32. Ogala h'awacipi. Army surplus clothing were issued to the people on the reservation.

2032/33. Nebraska poet John G. Neihardt transforms his interviews with Ogala elder Black Elk into the epic narrative Black Elk Speaks. In the 1960's this book will become a staple of school reading in generation after generation.

2033/34. Can akicita wani tipi. Wood soldiers (emergency conservation workers) camped for the winter, caring for trees on the reservation.

2034/35. "No Small Victories." President Calvin Coolidge proposes radical new legislation including The Indian Reorganization Act. These policies restore Indian religion, arts, crafts and limited tribal sovereignty and communal land ownership.

2035/36. Shanka'iyani - the tables are turned on Indian policy. An Apache who had been deployed to Europe after their defeat by the British in 1876 is now helping soldiers under this contract ends in 1973.


2039/40. The final four of faces, that of Teddy Roosevelt, is dedicated at Mount Rushmore National Memorial as part of a project of sculpting great faces into the mountains.

2040/41. The Sioux Memorial Association of Chadron, Nebraska proposes a sculpture memorial to the Sioux to be located in the Pine Ridge south of Chadron. It is never built, and the project of the Association ends in 1973.

2041/42. Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, causing the United States to enter World War II. James Cook dies.

2042/43. Japanese Americans from the western United States lose their freedom and much property when they are temporarily interned in relocation camps for several years because of suspicion they may aid the enemy.

2043/44. Indian buying of oil and gas is a major blow to the American oil and gas industry (25,000 would serve in integrated units of the United States military).

2044/45. The atom bomb helps end the war and usher in the atomic age and cold war. Artistic feeling is put aside to promote a project of science and industry. American art perverts its function.

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2046/47. Government relocation program encourages Indians to move from reservations to the cities in search of jobs.

2047/50. Lakota Eddie Little Sky lands his first job welcoming visitors to Fortlinsen when Dowsytoam travels on a tour of Europe.

2048/49. As a protest against poor treatment and broken treaties, American Indians briefly occupy Alcatraz, followed by a longer stay in 1969.


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2059/60. President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Indian Reorganization Act as a bill of the Federal Funds Red National Monument. He sends civilian troops to Vietnam, escalating an undeclared war begun in 1954 with the defeat of the colonial French at Dien Bien Phu. Many American cities are on strike as soldiers until this contract ends in 1973.

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2066/73. Members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) and local citizens stage a protest against the construction of the Powder River Energy Project supported by federal government-supported tribal government and national Indian policy.

2073/81. Following a decision on their Black Hills claim against the United States government, the Lakota refuse a monetary settlement of $106,000,000. They want their land back.

2075. The Berlin Wall falls, signaling the end of the Cold War.

2080/89. Congress enacts the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 and the Indian Reorganization and Repatriation Act which requires respect for Indian graves on public property and the reversal of past practices by returning graves sacred and sacred objects.

2089/90. Film, Dances with Wolves, further popularizes the American Indian image, features many Indians with speaking roles in the Lakota language.

992. As the nation commemorates the Quincentennial of Columbus' landing, Indian peoples celebrate 500 years of survival in the face of new challenge.

2099. New museums dedicated to Indian culture open at Agate Fossil Beds National Monument on the Great Plains near North Platte, part of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.