



**Chief Red Cloud, 1909**

*Oil on canvas*

*Frederick Weygold Collection*

*KOAR record number 1936.1.27.1*

“Chief of the Oglala Sioux at Pine Ridge, South Dakota. Painted in 1909, about five months before his death. He was 87 years old at that time, totally blind and almost totally deaf, practically lying on his deathbed.

Red Cloud was the commander-in-chief of the hostile Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho in the bloody wars of the sixties, when he is supposed to have commanded at one time from two to three thousand warriors. His original demand that the whites give up the forts along the Bozeman Trail to the Montana gold fields was finally complied with and Red Cloud came out victorious over the government and signed the treaty of peace of 1868. These advantages were, however, lost again, when a flood of prospectors and settlers went into the Black Hills region, the most valued hunting grounds of the Sioux, which led to the Indian war of 1876-1879, in which Red Cloud, however, did not participate. After 1868 Red Cloud lived in peace on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, where he lived to see the rapid decline of the culture of his people. He was entitled to count 80 “coups” (see the “coup stick” in the case with the outfit for a warrior).

Red Cloud was the last of the really great Indian leaders of the type of King Philip, Pontiac and Tecumseh.”

– *Weygold, from 1940 catalogue*

**Federal Hill (My Old Kentucky Home): The Hall with Stephen Foster's Desk, 1921**

*Graphite and chalk*

*Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Young E. Allison*

*KOAR record number 1961.1.4*

## Frederick Weygold (American, 1870-1941)

*by Betty Lyn Parker*

Frederick Weygold was born Friedrich Heinrich Phillip Adolph Weygold on June 13, 1870, to German-born parents in St. Charles, Missouri. At that time, caravans of ox-drawn prairie schooners still were heading westward along the Oregon Trail. Its eastern extension, Boone Lick Road, passed nearby, and seeing the long wagon trains of pioneers going to the Far West captured the young boy's imagination. He heard vivid tales about the Wild West while listening to neighborhood old-timers, including the dramatic news of General George Armstrong Custer's ill-fated attack against the Sioux in Montana. Days after that battle, the six-year-old watched as soldiers herded past long strings of pinto ponies confiscated from Chief Red Cloud's Oglala Sioux band in South Dakota.

Weygold's childhood education began in 1875 at a log cabin school near St. Charles. His mother had been ill at the time of his birth, so another Missouri family had been raising him. As his confirmation age approached in 1882 his father, then pastor of St. Paul's Evangelical Church in Louisville, sent for the youth. Weygold attended Louisville public schools until 1885; during this same year his mother died in St. Louis. His father sent him to Germany to continue his studies at a Gymnasium (the highest ranking of secondary schools), where he excelled in languages. After graduation from State College in 1893, Weygold returned to America in search of a vocation. His father had since remarried, and a little sister, Freida, had been born. Weygold briefly attended the Louisville Presbyterian Seminary that winter, but the ministry proved unsatisfactory. His father sent him back to Europe in 1894, this time to the University of Strassburg in the Alsace, a region rich in both German and French cultures.

While studying modern languages and history, Weygold's childhood interest in Native American life was rekindled by his discovery of a Sioux language grammar and by seeing captivating displays of American Indian works in European museums, many of which housed magnificent artifacts that had been collected for more than a century. Weygold saw no point in writing the thesis required for graduation and simply left school in 1896. When his family next heard from him, Weygold had begun to explore his artistic talents, first studying at the Art Academy in Karlsruhe (Baden), then later at the Art Academy in Stuttgart (Wurtemberg). There he soon joined in with a group of young nonconformist artists who, like himself, disdained the established art style. After graduating in 1899, Weygold remained in Europe until 1902.

Upon returning to America, Weygold traveled to Sioux territory and learned to speak their language. This experience, along with his previous academic work, helped develop the foundation for an extensive knowledge of Native American languages. He also continued his art training at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia,



studying under portrait painter William Merritt Chase. In 1908, after receiving word that his ather had suffered a paralytic stroke, Weygold returned to Louisville to attend to his father's health, and subsequently made it his home after the elder man's death the following year.

In 1909, the Ethnographic Museum of Hamburg sent Weygold to study the language and culture of the Sioux in South Dakota, assemble museum collections, and publish articles on his research in European scientific magazines. Thus began Weygold's lifelong work of painting and documenting life among the Plains Indians for various German museums. He spent much time living among the Sioux on the Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations. Extensive travels included stays with the Blackfoot in Montana, as well visits to the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, and Osage in Oklahoma. Throughout his career, Weygold lectured extensively on Native American topics, believing an enlightened public opinion would ameliorate the disgraceful treatment to which the various indigenous Indian nations had been exposed.

Weygold also illustrated several books, including German translations of well-known popular authors. As Stanley Vestal wrote in the foreword to his novel for young people, *Happy Hunting Grounds*, "I am indebted for a number of suggestions and for most sympathetic cooperation to the illustrator, Mr. Frederick Weygold, my partner in this enterprise. His long intercourse with the Plains tribes has given him an understanding of them quite unparalleled, in my opinion, among American artists. His familiarity with Indian exhibits in museums abroad, where the earliest collections are to be found, has prepared him to illustrate early Indian life perhaps more accurately and truly than any other living American artist."

Weygold eventually developed his own personal collection, a large portion of which was donated to The Speed Art Museum in the 1930s. Detailed firsthand observations recorded in his notebooks, photographs, sketches, watercolors, and oil paintings represent one of the first serious systematic studies of Native American culture, providing a unique context for research. Selected artwork and artifacts were the basis of the museum's "Indian Collection" exhibition in 1940, for which Weygold wrote the catalogue descriptions himself. Among the wall exhibits were his series of photographs on "The Indian Sign Language" and his watercolor copies of Native American originals in European museum collections. Weygold's artwork was exhibited in both Europe and America before his death on August 13, 1941.

The series of fifteen oil paintings exhibited in 1940, depicting some of the most striking scenes Weygold personally witnessed, preserve many aspects of a remarkable culture that already was ebbing away. The last portrait of Chief Red Cloud, Mahpiya Luta, captures the timeless dignity of this aged warrior, the only man ever to win, however briefly, a war against the United States Army. As remembered by his great-grandson Edgar Red Cloud (fourteen at the time), Red Cloud is actually wearing son Jack Red Cloud's war shirt because his own was unavailable, and research indicates the ceremonial pipe is likely Jack's as well. Typically, Weygold took several photographs of his subject before and during the sitting, meticulously noting details and precise color references, then completed the painting when he returned home to his studio in Louisville. Ironically, the buffalo, which had played such a prominent role in the culture of the Plains tribes, had become so scarce that by the time Weygold painted *Vanguard of the Herd*, he had to travel to Yellowstone Park to study the few buffaloes still remaining.



## Selected Books Illustrated by Frederick Weygold

*Hijessa: Jugenderinnerungen eines Sioux-Indianers*, German translation of Charles Alexander Eastman's *Indian Boyhood*, 1912.

*Winona: Indianergeschichten aus alter Zeit*, German translation of Charles Alexander Eastman's *Old Indian Days*, 1920.

*Natahki und Ich: die Geschichte einer roten Frau und eines weissen Mannes in den Zelten der Schwarzfussindianer*, German translation of James Willard Schultz's *Natahki and I*, 1922.

*In Natahki's Zeit: mein Leben als Indianer*, German translation of James Willard Schultz's *My Life as an Indian*, 1925.

*Happy Hunting Grounds*, by Stanley Vestal, 1928.

## Other Weygold Publications

*Ich Dakota: Pine Ridge Reservation 1909*, by Wolfgang Haberland, photographs by Frederick Weygold.

*Die Hunkazeremonie*, in *Archiv für Anthropologie, Völkerforschung und kolonialen Kulturwandel*, by Frederick Weygold, 1912.

*Die Oglala-Sammlung Weygold im Hamburgischen Museum für Völkerkunde (teil 1-7)*, in *Mitteilungen aus dem Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg*, 1973-74, 1976-78, 1980-81.

## Bibliography

*Who's Who in Kentucky*, 1936.

*The Indian Collection and Oil Paintings Illustrating Indian Life as He Saw It in 1909-1937*, by Frederick Weygold, 1940 exhibition catalogues for The Speed Art Museum.

*Clifton Unitarian Church History*, excerpts prepared by Kay Fitzmeyer Levolsi, 1942.

*Mission to Indian Country*, by F.W. Woolsey, in *The Courier-Journal & Times Magazine* (12 May 1974, p 14-21)

*Frederich Weygold and the Last Portrait of Red Cloud*, by Charles Ronald Corum & Mary Ann Mayer, in *South Dakota History* (1981, v11 #3, p161-3)

### **The Vanguard of the Herd**

Oil on canvas

Frederick Weygold Collection  
KOAR record number 1936.1.27.4

"Buffaloes migrating in spring from the direction of the Black Hills (which are seen on the horizon) across the White River into the plains of South and North Dakota. Subject from the Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota.

The buffaloes were studied in Yellowstone Park."

– Weygold, in 1940 catalogue