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48090

SIoux PIPE BOWL AND STEM WRAPPED WITH COPPER TELEGRAPH WIRE

Circa 1880
Length 28½ in. overall

The ash wood stem is wrapped with copper wire along half its length. A row of brass upholstery tacks decorates the flat section. The stem is accompanied by a catlinite "T" shaped bowl artfully carved with circular decorative bands. Brass wire was a coveted item and Indian traders made an effort to have quantities available. Brass wire was even included in annuity payments to the tribes. It was used to make earrings, bracelets, and armbands for both men and women. Tomahawk handles and pipestems were occasionally wrapped with brass wire for decorative effect. Copper, however, was used for telegraph wire and it is interesting to speculate on the source of wire for this pipestem.

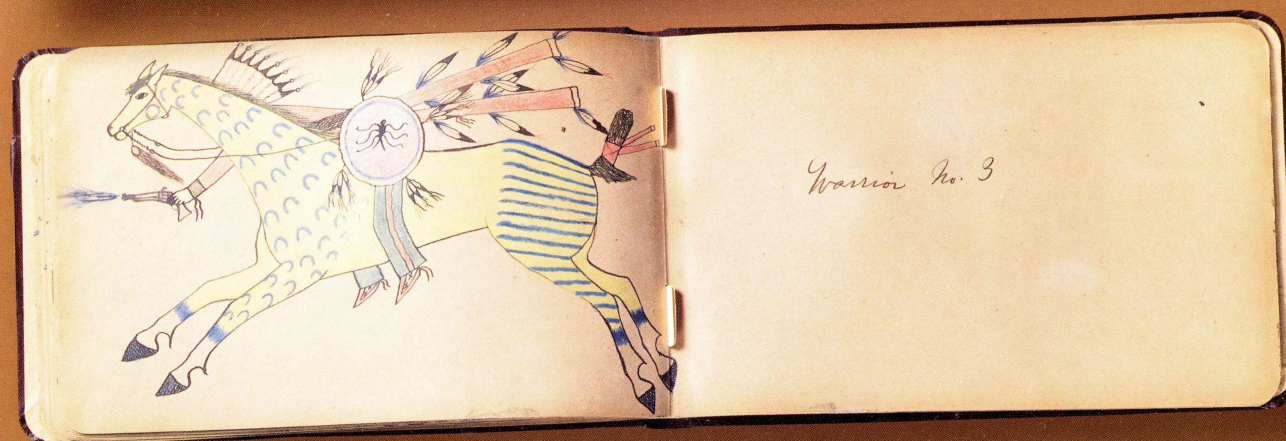
Provenance
James Hart, Acquisition, Inc., Maple Shade, New Jersey.

Reference
Hanson, James. *Metal Weapons, Tools, and Ornaments of the Teton Dakota Indians*. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1975, pp. 98-100.

Estimate: \$3,000-\$5,000

48091

**AN INTACT AND COMPLETE ALBUM OF 30 WALTER BONE SHIRT DRAWINGS
PINE RIDGE RESERVATION, SOUTH DAKOTA**

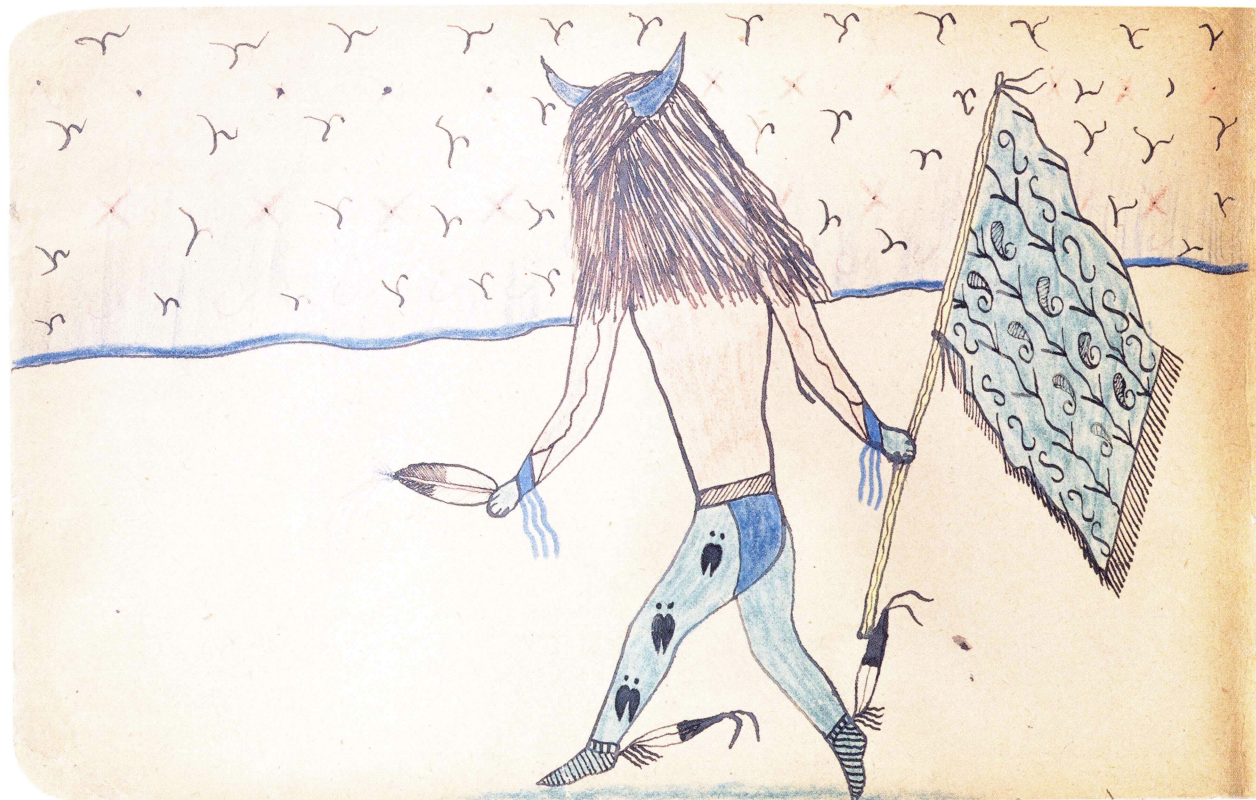


c. 1887-88
Leather album, colored pencil, and ink
5 x 7⅞ inches
Provenance
Marcy Burns, New York, New York
Gallery West, Tucson, Arizona

Estimate: \$400,000-\$600,000

pictures drawn by
 Walter Bone Shirt.
 For "The Committee."
 Compliments of
 H. C. Meade.

Dedication Page



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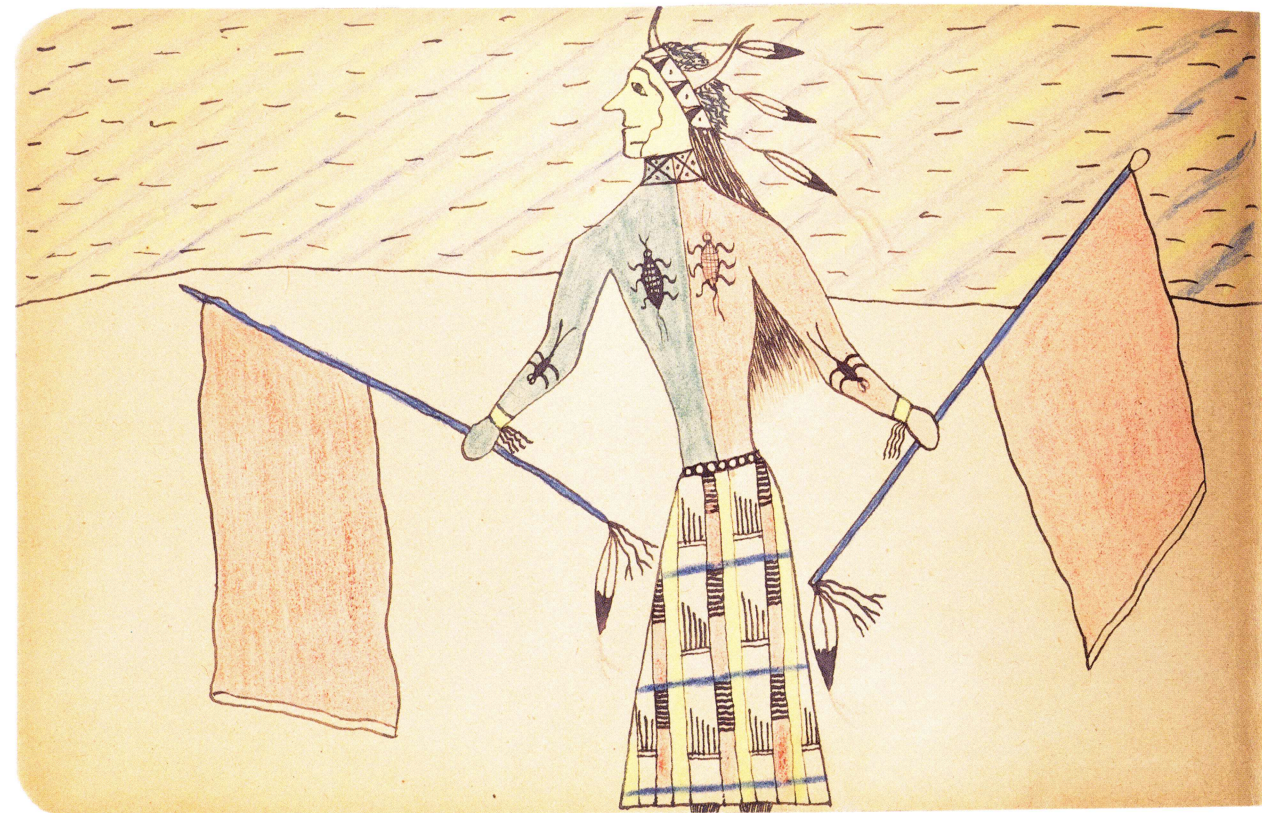
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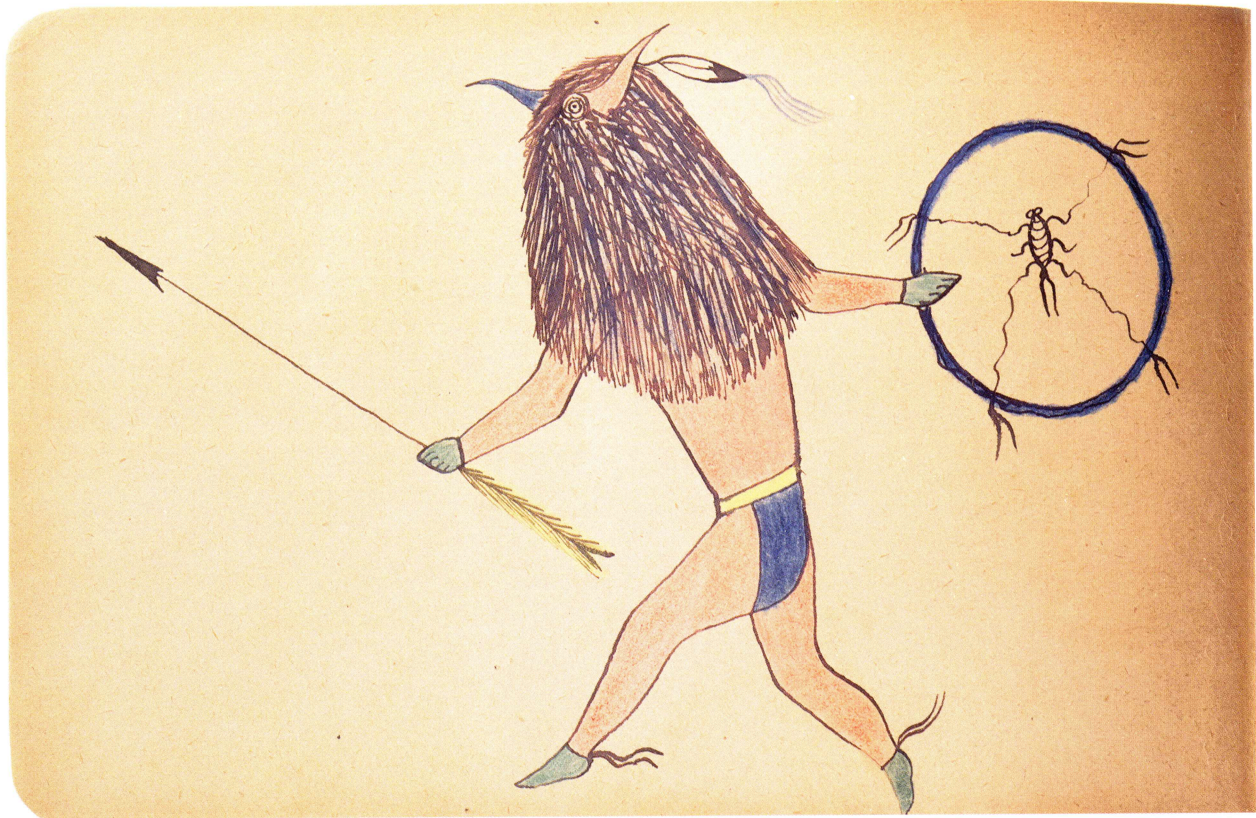
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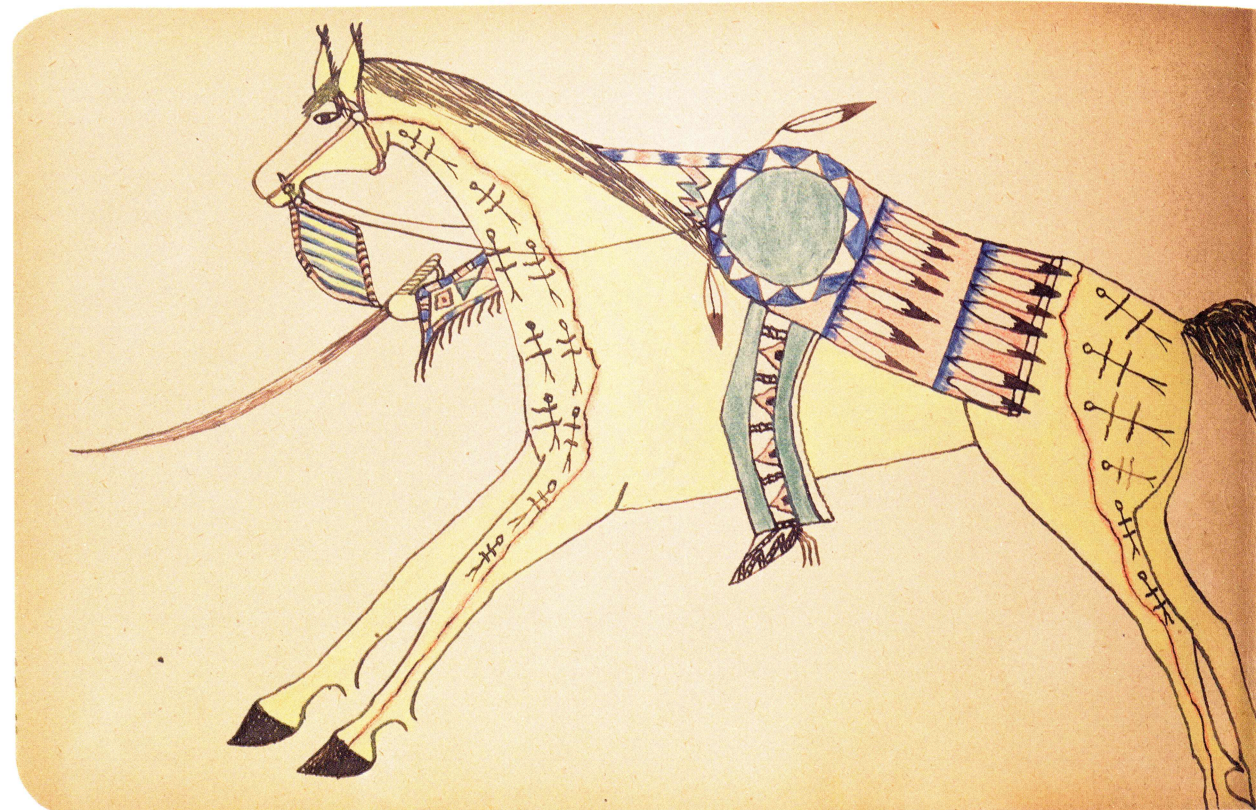
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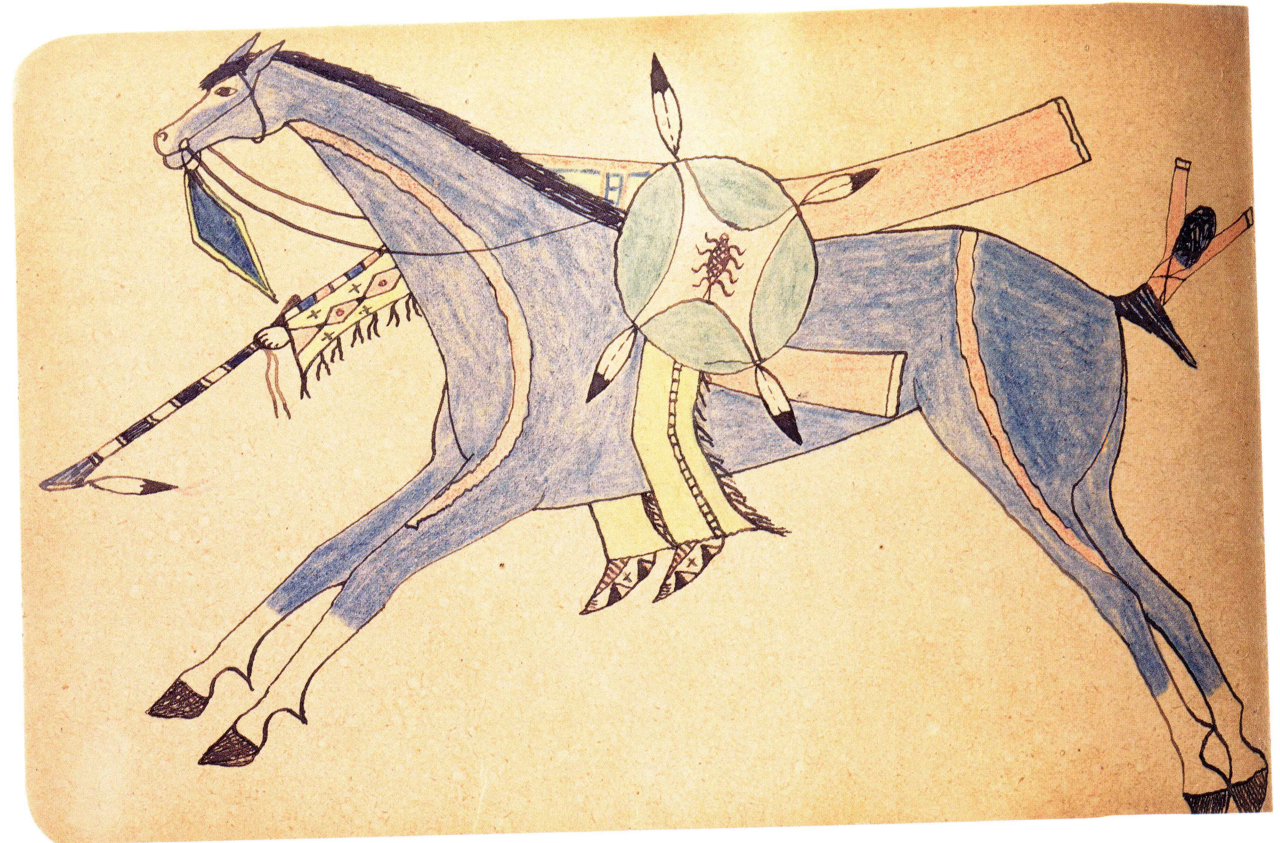
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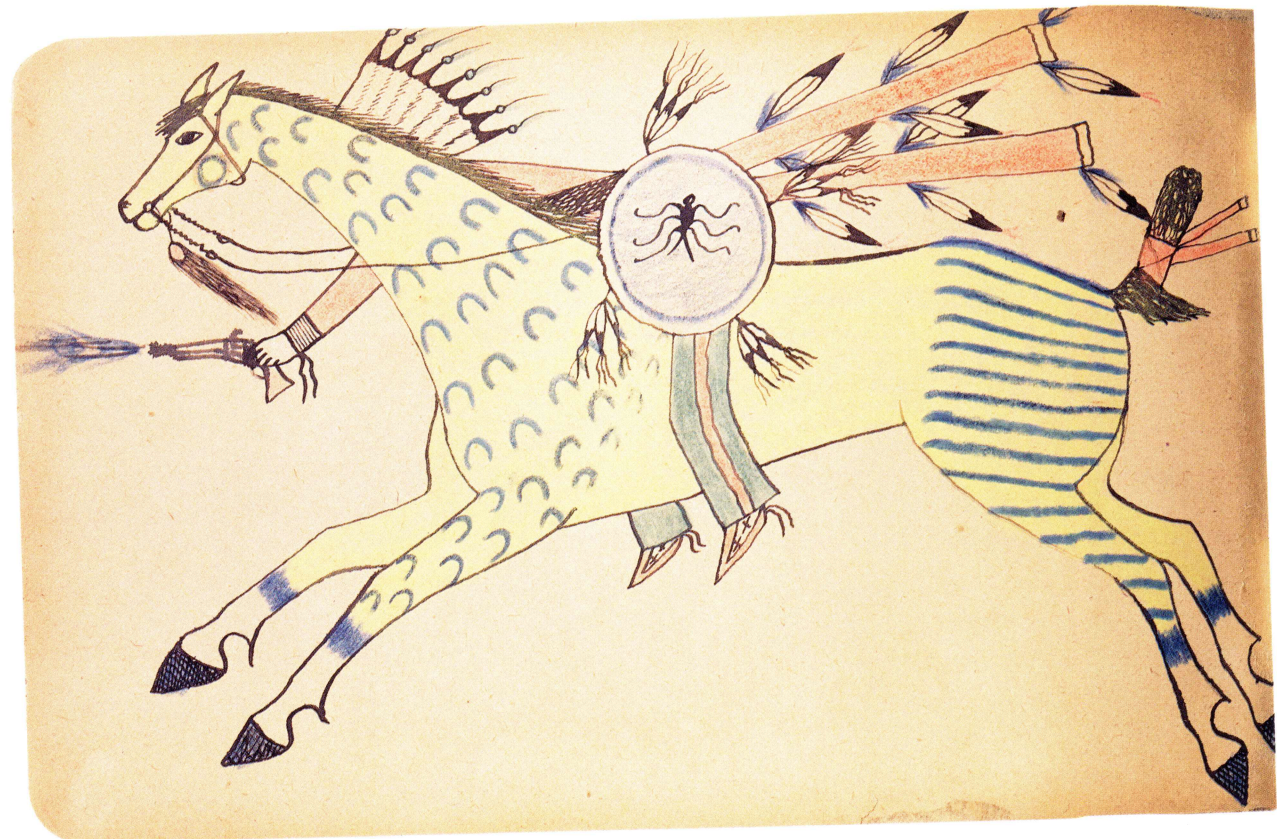
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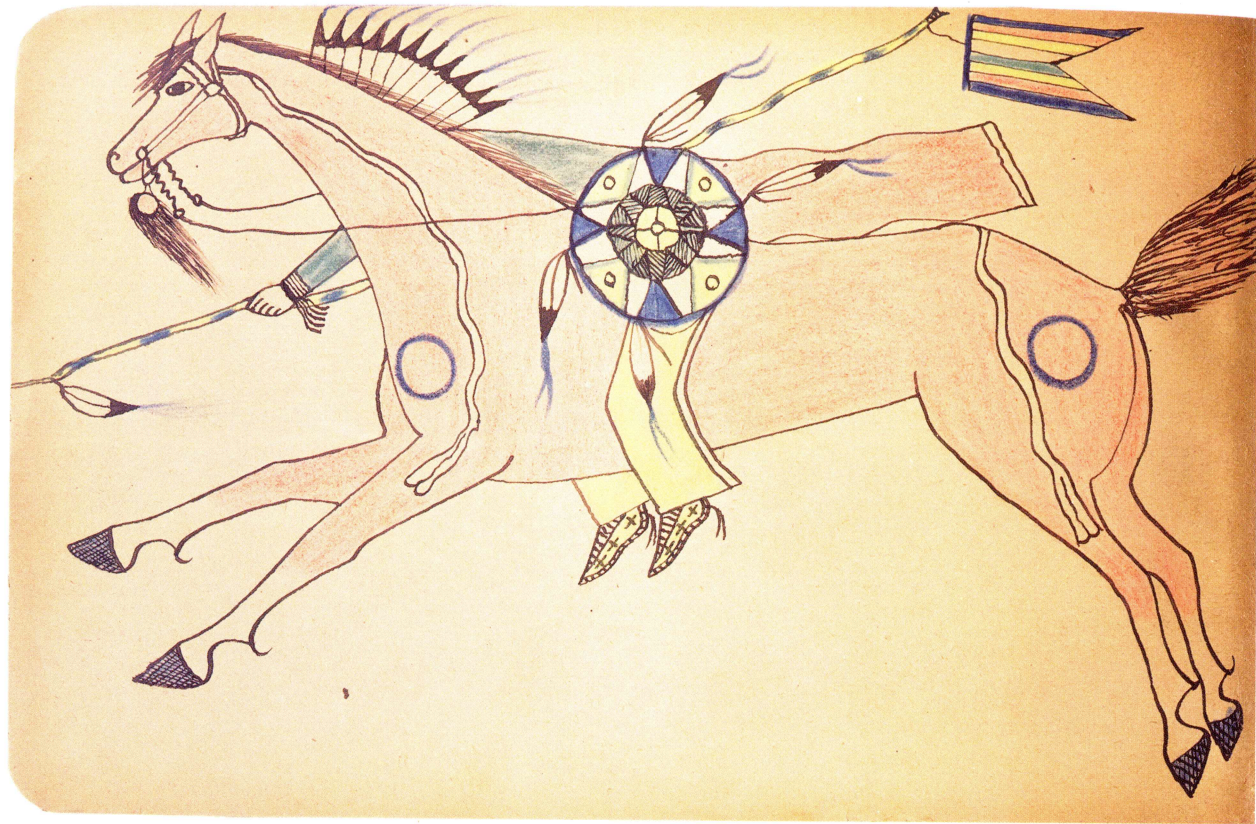
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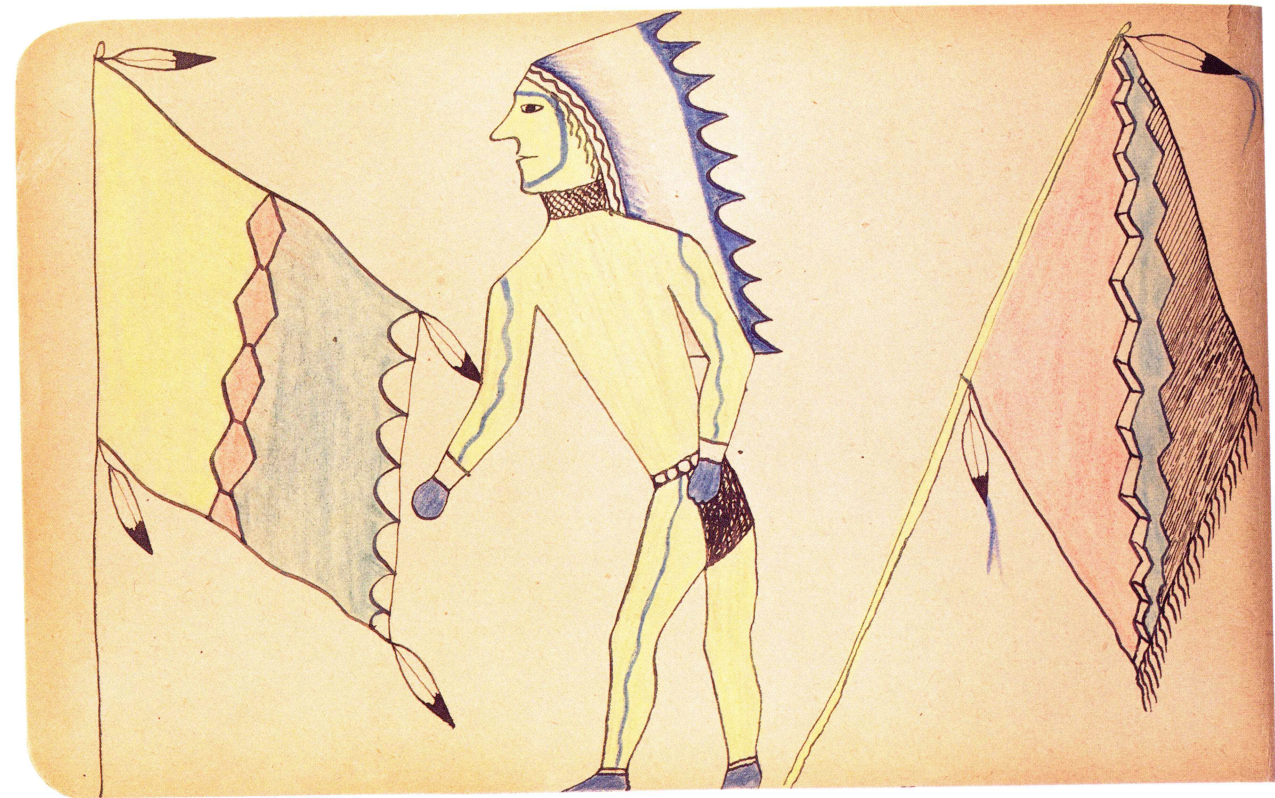
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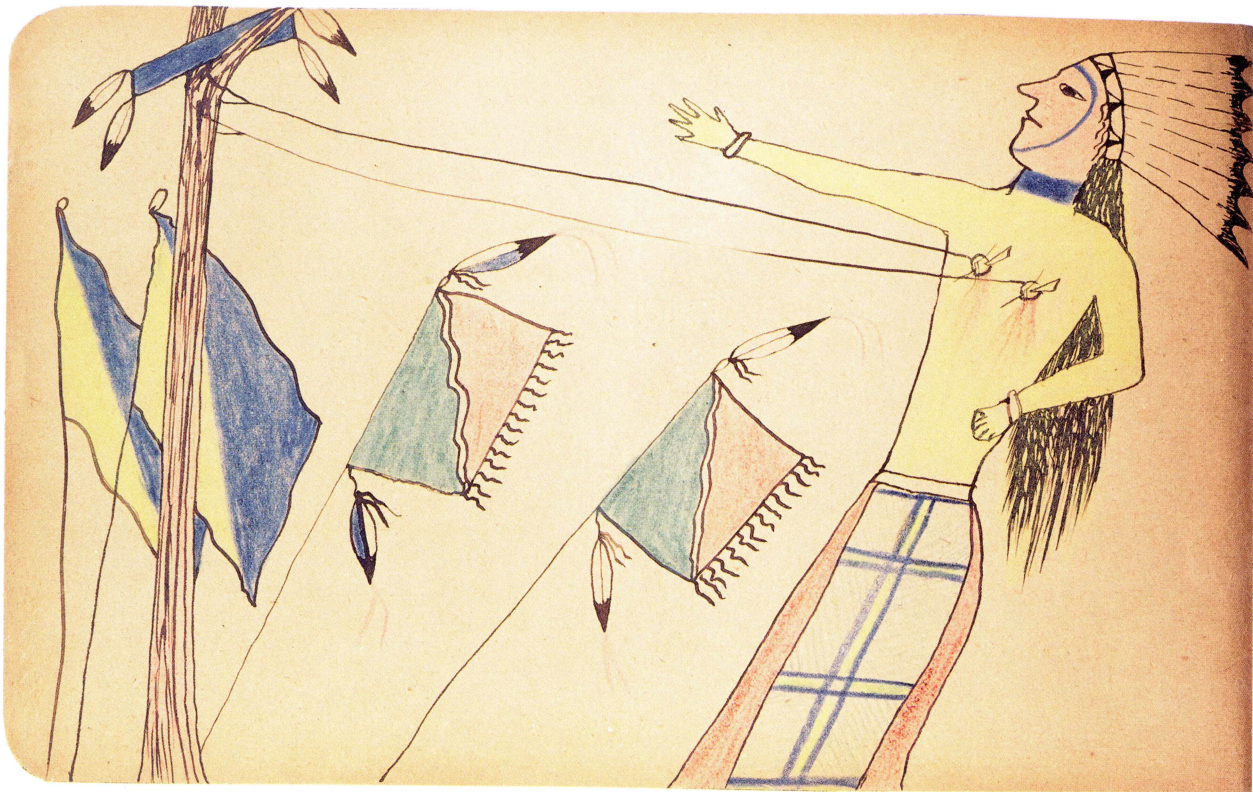
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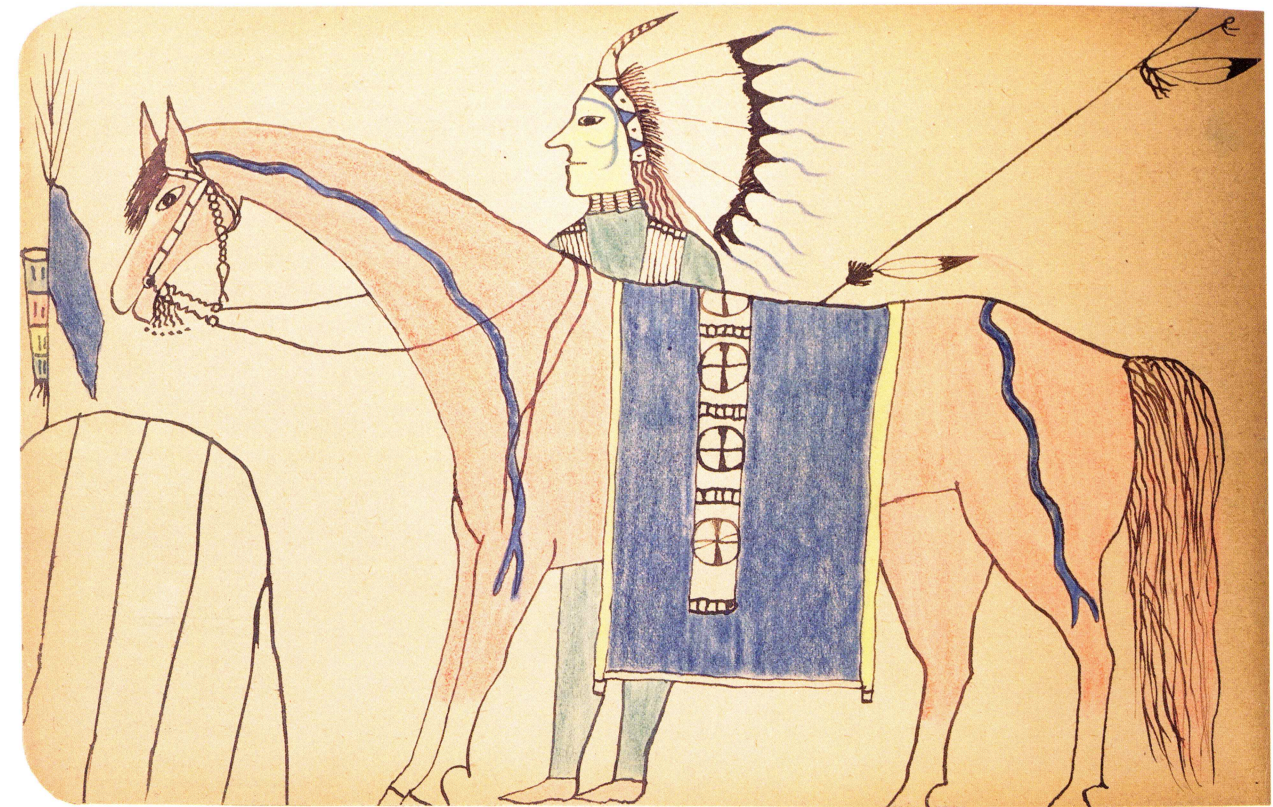
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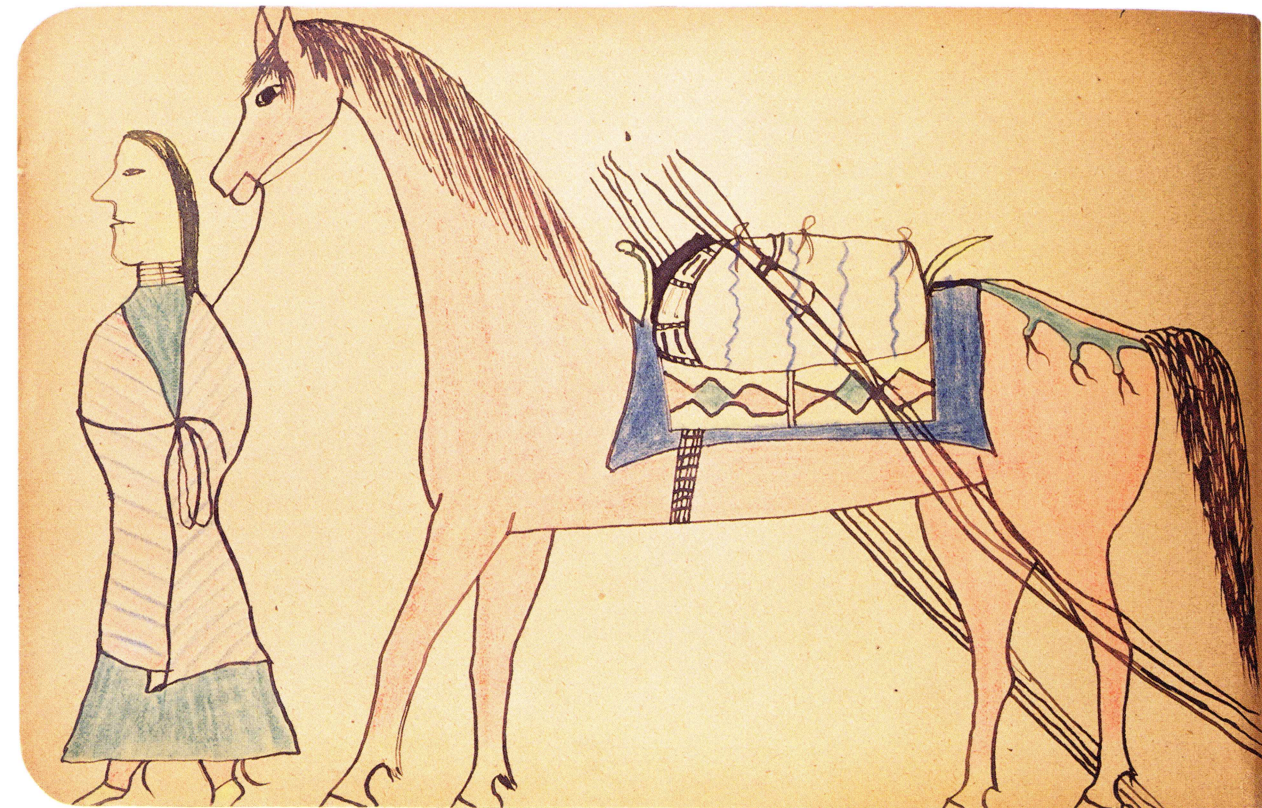
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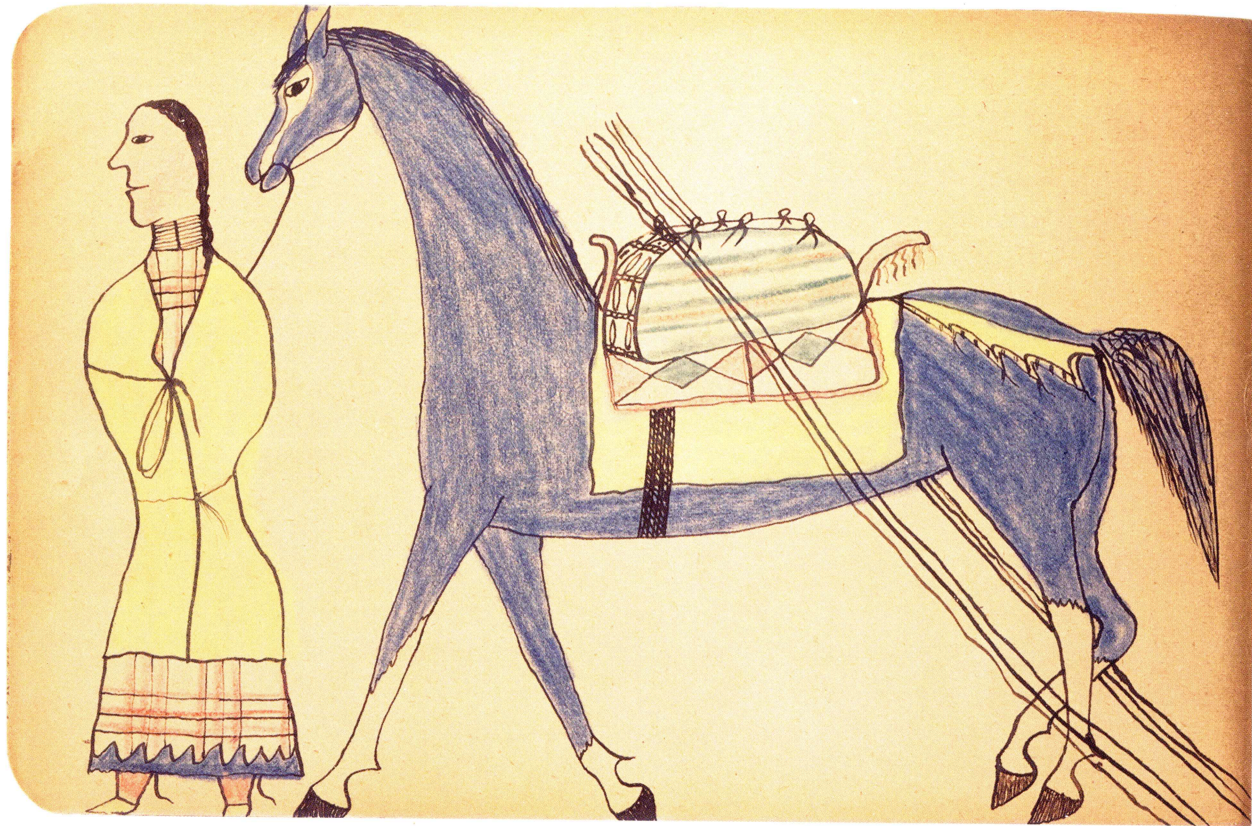
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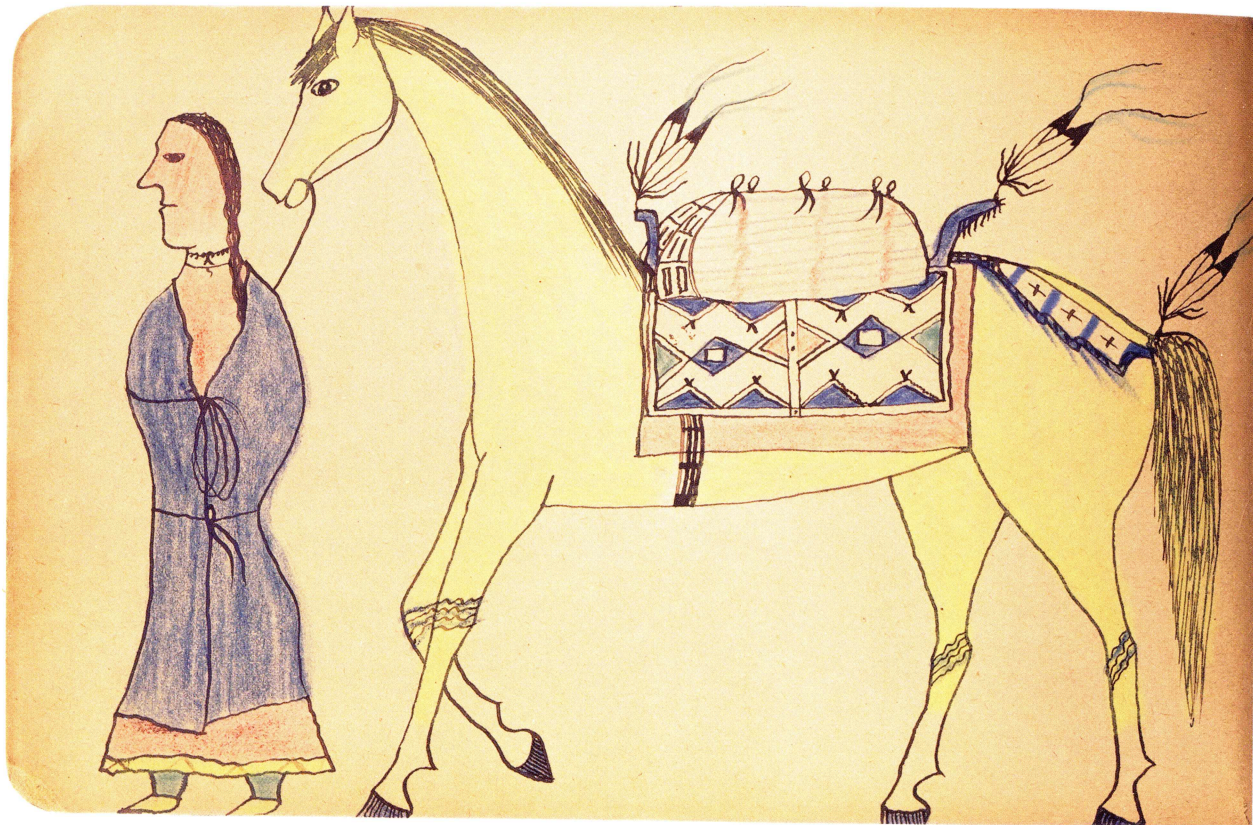
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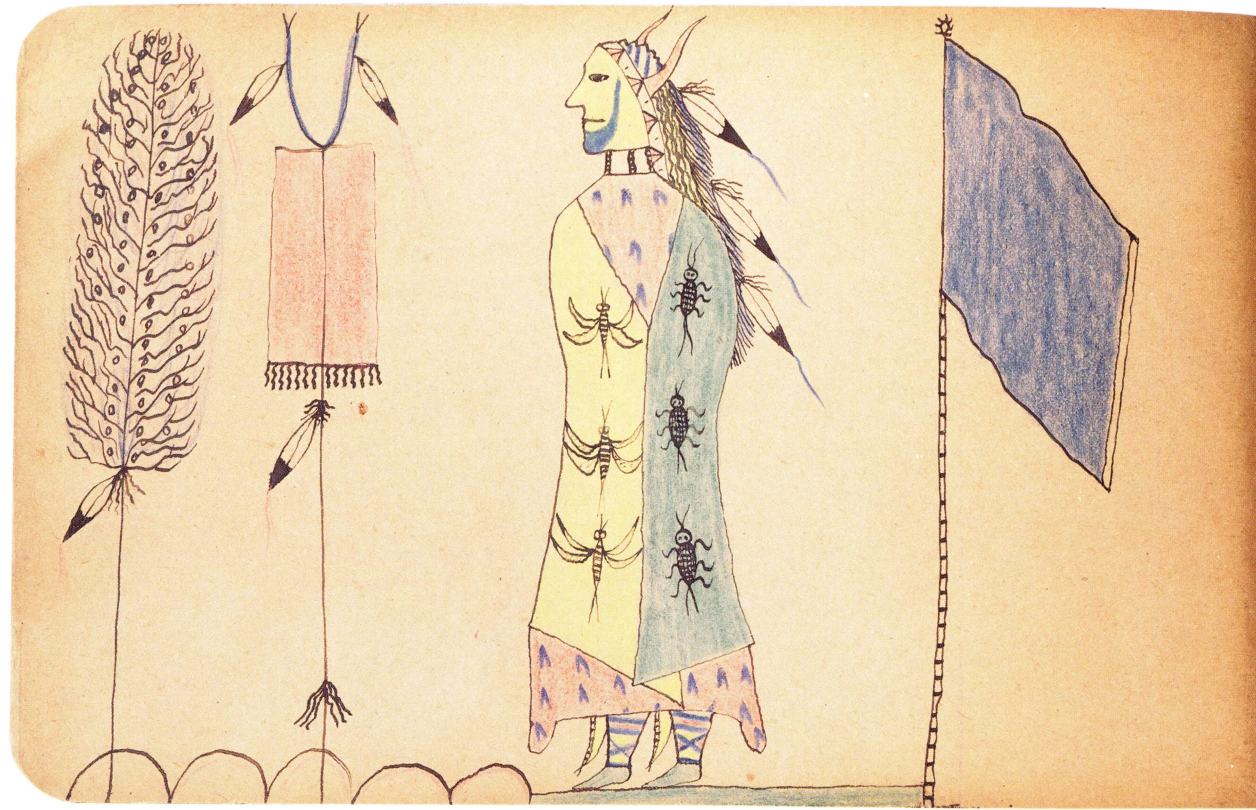
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THE SUN DANCE LEDGER OF "NEVER MISSES," CALLED WALTER BONE SHIRT

IDENTIFYING THE ARTIST

The flyleaf of this book of drawings is inscribed by "M.E. Meade". Despite the spelling discrepancy, this is believed to have been Mary Eliza Mead, whose husband operated a trading post on the Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota. In a memoir of her life Mary wrote: "When we lived at the Agency, I made a collection of Indian bead work, porcupine quill work and other Indian handiwork, buckskin beaded women's dresses, men's buckskin and cloth shirts beaded and fringed, tobacco sacks, pipestone pipes and tomahawks, war clubs, bows and arrows, beaded gun cases, bow and arrow quivers, children's beaded and fringed jackets, which I hung from the walls and ridge poles of the house. They were much admired" (*Western Nebraska Churchman*, April & May, 1927). Mary Mead and her husband moved to Pine Ridge in the 1880s, and were present through the chaos of 1890-91.

Three other collections of drawings by this artist are known to survive. In the University of Montana Libraries, Missoula, 18 drawings were received without documentation from the daughter of Lt. John S. Parke, who obtained them while serving as military commander at the Rosebud Reservation, South Dakota, in 1890-91, during the Ghost Dance uprising (see: www.lib.umt.edu/research/digitalcollections/ledger.htm). Another 18 drawings now in the Detroit Institute of Arts, also undocumented except as to location of origin, were collected directly from James G. Wright, who was Agent of the Rosebud Reservation 1889-96. A third collection of 13 drawings in the same, distinctive style is in the Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma. This is entirely undocumented, save for written inscriptions in Lakota and English on two of the pages saying that "This book belongs to Charles Good Boy," and the Lakota nickname *Can Wohn*.



Figure 1. Red Warrior (*Akicize Luta*), called Alfred John Bone Shirt, a younger brother of the artist, while performing with the Pawnee Bill Wild West Show. Photo by Erwin E. Smith, Boston, Massachusetts, June, 1908. Erwin E. Smith Collection of the Library of Congress on Deposit at the Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, Neg. No. LC-56-331.

The important book of 30 drawings addressed herewith is accompanied by a dedicatory page which attributes them as the work of "Walter Bone Shirt". This also identifies the artist of the other collections. The 1900 U.S. Federal Census of Meyer County, South Dakota (later divided into parts of present Mellette and Todd counties, and incorporating the Rosebud Reservation) lists three "Heads of Household" by the name of Bone Shirt, a father and two sons. The elder man, identified simply as "Bone Shirt," (*Hohu Ogle* in the Lakota language, which refers to a breastplate of tubular, bone beads called "hairpipes", such as those shown in **Figs. 1 & 12**) was born in 1830, and was married to Plenty Bugs, (*Wabluska Ota*, called Anna Bone Shirt, b. 1835). Their eldest son, identified on the census as "Junior Bone Shirt", was born in 1856, and was married to War Bonnet Woman (b. 1863).

No children resided with them. Neither "Junior" nor his wife (nor the Bone Shirts, Sr.), could speak, read or write English. A second son Red Battle, or Red Warrior (*Akicize Luta*—see **Fig. 1**), called Alfred John Bone Shirt (b. 1875) was married to White Cow Goes Out (called Susie Bone Shirt, b. 1877). Both could

read, write and speak English, indicating they had been through a program of schooling. They had one son, Thomas, born in 1898. A third son, the same age as Alfred John—they may have been twins—is listed as "David Bone Shirt" on the 1890 census of Rosebud Reservation. His Lakota name is given as *Kahna Wanica* (Has No Shavings). It seems very likely that the inscription on the Gilcrease collection was made by this son. In struggling to frame the Lakota syllables in Roman characters, *Can Wohn* was David's best solution. And as one brother was "Alfred John," the other was "David Charles."



Figure 2. Two Strike (*Num Capa*), Head Chief of the Brule Lakota. Photo by Alexander M. Gardner, 1872. Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, P1967-3159.

It is extremely unlikely that the elder Bone Shirt could have been the artist, because none of the 79 known drawings depicts any battle exploits. To document one's battle prowess, (and by extension, one's social position) was the primary purpose of drawing for all Lakota men who lived during the mid-19th century. The fact that this artist shows NO battle exploits denotes that he must have been too young to have acquired any.

Similarly, it is unlikely that either of the youngest Bone Shirt brothers could have been the artist, because both were only 14 or 15 years old in 1890-91, when most of these drawings were obtained. They may have been created several years earlier, so the

two younger sons were probably too young to have acquired the intense experience of the Sun Dance ceremony which is detailed throughout these collections.

The elder son therefore, called Junior Bone Shirt, is the most likely candidate. A traditionalist, full-blood Lakota, three of his grandparents were Brule, and his maternal grandfather was a Blackfoot Lakota. Junior Bone Shirt was 34 years old in 1890. He might actually have been named "Walter" (either in files of the Rosebud Agency; or the Episcopal or Catholic church), but everyone in the community just called him "Junior," which in the Lakota language would be *Cinca* (pronounced CHEEN-cha), meaning "son of". On a partial census conducted at Spotted Tail Agency in 1877, the Lakota name of Bone Shirt's eldest son is given as "Never Misses" (Federal Archives and Records Center, Kansas City, Record Group 75. We are indebted to William Wierzbowski for this important detail).

Where Junior Bone Shirt lived is also significant. Subsequent to the assassination of Spotted Tail in 1881, the senior chief of the Brule Lakota tribe was Two Strike (*Num Capa*—**Fig. 2**). On the 1900 census, Two Strike is listed as "Head of Household #43;" and Junior Bone Shirt was "Head of Household #46." Several children of Iron Shell, another, noted Brule chief, are listed on the same page of the 1900 census as Junior Bone Shirt, indicating extensive connections at the highest level of Brule society. It was traditional for Brule men to join the family group of their wife. It is likely, therefore, that Never Misses, called Junior Bone Shirt, was married either to a daughter of Two Strike, or of Iron Shell, and by that connection was related to both chiefs.

Junior Bone Shirt was only 14 years old when Spotted Tail and his lieutenant Two Strike took their people to the White River Agency in 1870. Later they moved to "Spotted Tail Agency", now

the Rosebud Reservation. This ended the active period of warfare for most Brule males—certainly for the families of both chiefs—so Junior Bone Shirt is unlikely to have had any opportunity to go to war. This would account for the absence of personal battle exploits among his compositions.

In addition to being the senior Brule political leader, Two Strike was also a Sun Dance sponsor and leader. His great-great-grandchildren still sponsor a well-attended Sun Dance ceremony each summer at the Two Strike Community, near St. Francis, South Dakota. As Junior Bone Shirt was a close adherent, and probably a relative of Chief Two Strike, it is likely that he was an established *Itancan* (Ee-TAWN-chon), or priest of the Sun Dance ceremony. Certainly he was old enough to have participated many times. In the collection of 18 "Bone Shirt" drawings at Detroit Institute of Arts, two compositions (pages 3a & 19) are identified as Sun Dance leaders, and may be self-portraits. Similar drawings exist in this collection (**Plates 7 - 10**). This clarifies how Bone Shirt could have had the intimate knowledge necessary to produce drawings of this cultural content and detail.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

During the Wounded Knee troubles in 1890-91, after the assassination of Sitting Bull on December 15, 1890, the Two Strike *tiyo'spaye* (or extended family community) fled westward from Rosebud to join the traditionalist "hostiles" in the badlands of the Pine Ridge Reservation. In fact, Brules from Two Strike's camp were the first relief party to arrive at the Wounded Knee battlefield, and bring back a few, badly-injured survivors (Utley, 1963: 231-32). This historical certainty places Junior Bone Shirt at precisely the time and location that the M.E. Mead collection of Walter Bone Shirt drawings was acquired.

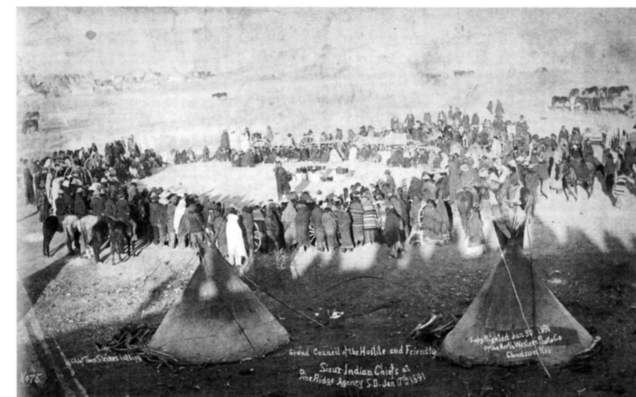


Figure 3. Two Strike informing members of his band that they would surrender, and move from their camp in the Badlands to Pine Ridge Agency. Photo by Northwestern Photo Company, January 30, 1891. Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Neg. No. X-31289.

Two weeks later, Two Strike was centrally involved in arranging the surrender of the hostile camp. He was photographed by the Northwestern Photo Company giving the surrender oration (**Fig. 3**). Although we do not have an identified portrait of Junior Bone Shirt, he certainly was one of the people in that assemblage. At that sensitive and dangerous time, Two Strike may personally have been the conduit by which the drawings of his relative were perhaps presented to an Army officer, who later conveyed them to Mary Eliza Mead. Or after the surrender, the drawings may have been given or traded to Mrs. Mead directly at her husband's Pine Ridge store. The Brules were interned at Pine Ridge through the late spring of 1891 (**Fig. 4**).

When the Two Strike exiles returned to Rosebud, they were taken in charge by the military commander there, Lt. John S.

Parke, whose other collection of Bone Shirt drawings now reside at University of Montana Libraries, Missoula (see McCrea, 2006). Again, it is likely that Two Strike personally was responsible for presenting an elegant gift to smooth the homecoming of his band.



Figure 4. Members of the Two Strike band, while interned at Pine Ridge Agency. Photo by Solomon D. Butcher (?), spring 1891. Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Neg. No. X-31767.

The other, known Bone Shirt drawings now in the Chandler-Pohrt collection at Detroit Institute of Arts, were obtained by Milford G. Chandler from James G. Wright, who was Agent at Rosebud, 1889-1896, and was the other government official with whom Two Strike needed to establish good relations upon his return in 1891 (on Wright's tenure, see Foreman, 1942: 120-121; and Hamilton & Hamilton, 1971: 88-89).

The circumstances of acquisition for three of the four Bone Shirt collections, therefore, suggest that these beautiful drawings may have played a role in mitigating the very desperate plight of the Brule people, immediately following the massacre at Wounded Knee.

HISTORICAL SEQUENCE AND APPROXIMATE DATES

All four of the Walter Bone Shirt collections depict Sun Dance scenes, but each shows a unique assemblage of participants, and variant activities. This suggests that each collection is the individual record of a particular ceremony, in different years. In the 19th century it was unusual for an individual to pledge participation in the grueling ceremony more than once (a requirement was abstention from food and water for long periods in temperatures often above 100 degrees). The fact that Bone Shirt was involved in multiple years is further, direct evidence that his role was as one of the *Itancans*, or spiritual leaders.

Three of the Bone Shirt collections passed into White ownership in early 1891. The three, annual ceremonies these drawings document, therefore, occurred no later than 1888-1890. Though one or another may have been slightly earlier, probably all occurred post-1885. Progression in the artist's style suggests the order in which the three collections were created, and therefore reasonably close dates of their origin.

The horse figures in the Meade collection, while beautifully drawn, are more tentative and less polished than those in the collections at Detroit, Missoula and Tulsa. Bone Shirt was still experimenting with proportion, so that the horses in the Meade compositions are all rather long bodied. The poses are also repetitive, without the innovative positions achieved in some of his later compositions (compare Feder, 1972: 84; and Penny, 1992: 290-293). The Meade drawings are, therefore, the earliest of the Bone Shirt collections, created ca. 1887-88. In this writer's opinion, the Detroit collection was created next, ca. 1888-89. The Missoula drawings are the most polished, and hence a bit later, recording the Brule Sun Dance ceremony of 1889 or 1890.

For my friend Ross Frank
Mike Cowdrey 21 August 2006

The 13 drawings in the Gilcrease collection are very similar to those at Missoula, done in Bone Shirt's most mature style. In the opinion of this author they were made a few years later still, during the mid-1890s, and given by Junior Bone Shirt to his younger brother David Charles, who then inscribed them. Ration records for Rosebud Reservation indicate that on March 27, 1894, Junior Bone Shirt joined the Pawnee Bill Wild West Show for its first tour of the eastern United States. The drawings now in the Gilcrease collection may have been a homecoming gift for his younger brother in that period.

THE SUN DANCE CEREMONY

The Sun Dance is an overwhelming spectacle of religious devotion in which sacrifice for the benefit of one's family, friends, community and the Earth itself is a primary theme. It occurred about the time of Summer Solstice, in an open, circular structure of erected poles and cross rafters which was built anew for each, annual ceremony (Figs. 5, 6 & 7). It is the Sun Dance, with its many diverse activities, which Bone Shirt chose as the theme for every one of his 79 drawings that are known to exist. The first ten of the Bone Shirt drawings in the Meade Collection are distinguished by beautifully drawn and subtly-colored panels across the top of the composition. What these represent are the cloth awnings draped across the rafters around the outer perimeter of the circular Sun Dance lodge, to provide shade for the hundreds of spectators (Figs. 5 & 6). Throughout most of the 19th century, several prominent families might be honored during a Sun Dance by being asked to loan their buffalo skin tipi covers, and the interior linings or "draft screens," to be draped across the lodge rafters to provide this shade (see Powell, 1992: Fig. 2; and Maurer, 1992: Cat. No. 155, for examples).



Figure 5. Oglala Sun Dance ceremony witnessed at Red Cloud Agency, Nebraska, July 1874, by the artist Jules Tavernier. From *Harper's Weekly*, January 2, 1875. Note the cloth offering banners (shown as red in hand-colored issues of the newspaper); and the cloth awnings laid across the rafters. Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Neg. No. Z-3283.

By the 1870s, however, through reservation traders like Mary Mead and her husband, the Sioux had access to printed calico cloth by the bolt. In a multitude of bright colors and intricate patterns, such cloth panels provided not only shade, but added a completely new design element to the Sun Dance structure, itself. With the bright, prairie sun blazing above, these cloth awnings added an effect much like stained glass windows in a church. Spectators and participants alike assumed an ethereal aspect as their bodies were mottled by these diffused patterns of projected color. Under this "Big Top", shadows gained contour; and movement gained texture. Undoubtedly, the fact that it was the *Sun* which created

this mystical "paint", made the effect even more appealing.

It is this evocative "light show" which Bone Shirt has documented with such lavish care in ten of his drawings. Using the most sophisticated shading found anywhere in Plains Indian art of the 19th century, he has rendered cloth of pale blue speckled with designs of stars, spots, stripes and arabesques. Often, his pale patterns are so subtle as to escape notice, unless one can peer at them from a distance of a few inches. See Fig. 8, for a selection of details. Incredibly, Bone Shirt even succeeded in using yellow to over-pattern blue (Plates 4, 5 & 7). Again, the especial attention he devoted to this structural aspect of the ceremony suggests he may have been one of the primary leaders, a man who helped to design and build the national cathedral, year after year. It also reveals him as an artist of unusual skill and sophistication.

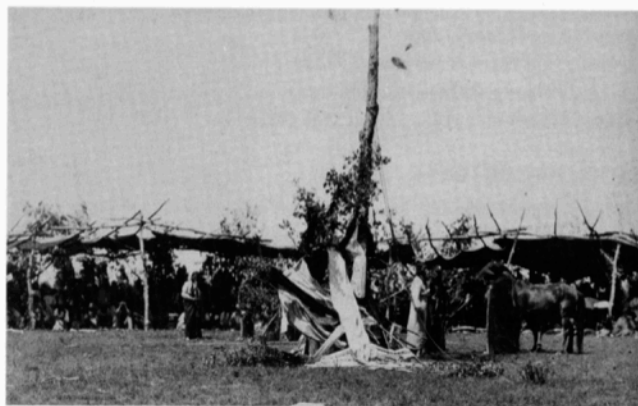


Figure 6. Oglala Lakota Sun Dance ceremony near Red Cloud Agency, Nebraska, July 1882. Note the large pile of offering cloths laid at the foot of the Center Pole; and the two horses being given away, at the right. Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, P1967-646.

In Plates 2, 5 & 6, the scalloped lower edges of the suspended cloth panels indicate that they had previously been in use as draft screens, or decorative liners inside individual family tipis. In a continuation of the earlier tradition, these have been loaned temporarily for the ceremony. The tie laces along the "upper" edge are indicated in Plates 5 & 6, now become decorative "pendants" with the liners inverted. Plate 2 illustrates the lower edge of a lodge liner, with the holes by which it was staked to the ground when in use inside a tipi. To each of these stake-holes the loaning family has added an eagle-feather pendant as a respectful accent to the Sun Dance lodge. Like the cloth banners, such feathers were continually stirred by the wind, adding peripheral motion to the ambience of the ceremony. For a photograph showing Chief Two Strike posed before another Brule tipi liner also decorated with eagle feathers, see Hamilton & Hamilton, 1971: 277. It was the tension, between the staked-down bottom edge of these cloth tipi liners, and the tie thongs along the top edge by which the panel was attached to the poles of a tipi, which over time stretched the cloth liners out of shape, creating the scalloped contours depicted by Bone Shirt.

Among the most common of offerings in the latter-19th century were banners of expensive and colorful cloth. Suspended from sticks carried in the hands (Plates 1 & 7), or the same sticks erected in the earth (Plates 9, 17, 21, 27, etc.), or worn to accent a headdress (Plates 8 & 11), or on an implement (Plate 16), or tied to the posts of the main structure itself (Fig. 5), these offering banners danced on the omnipresent prairie winds, sculpting the visual field, in complement with the sacred, resonant hymns of the ceremony, which lift the heart, and lead the soul. The wind is the breath of the Earth, which these banners make manifest. Into a

corner of each banner a separate, prayerful bit of tobacco, a sacred plant for the Lakota people, was tied as an additional offering at the tips of the banners shown in Plates 19, 21 & 27. After four days of use, perhaps soaked with the sweat of the dancers—the most elemental of offerings; or steeped in blood (Plate 21), these banners were carried to the foot of the Center Pole by each participant and abandoned as personal tokens of gratitude to the Deity (Fig. 6).



Figure 7. Brule Lakota Sun Dance ceremony at the Two Strike community, near St. Francis, South Dakota, ca. 1920. Note the cloth offering banners planted at the foot of the Center Pole. Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Neg. No. X-31670.

The Sioux concept of physical sacrifice was eloquently expressed in 1911 by a Yanktonai man named Chased By Bears: "A man's body is his own, and when he gives his body or his flesh he is giving the only thing which really belongs to him...I might give tobacco or other articles in the Sun Dance, but if I gave these and kept back the best, no one would believe that I was in earnest. I must give something that I really value to show that my whole being goes with the lesser gifts; therefore I promise to give my body" (Densmore, 1918: 96).

The Sun Dance involved four, main types of physical sacrifice, each of which was a personal choice of the individual dancer (see Walker, 1917: 116-117). The first form did not involve blood sacrifice, but consisted entirely of dancing from sunrise to sunset (about 15 hours) for two days without food or water, in temperatures often in excess of 100 degrees. This was a grueling ordeal for anyone, especially for women or the elderly, who might be praying for the health of a relative. This form of sacrifice is depicted by Bone Shirt in Plates 27 - 30.

A second form of sacrifice involved the skin of the dancer's back being pinched up, then pierced with a knife over each shoulder blade, and a wooden skewer run through each wound. To these skewers rawhide ropes were attached, and many, heavy buffalo skulls were tied to these, which the dancer must drag around the open circle of the Sun Lodge, until the skewers were torn out. Bone Shirt depicts a man painted to receive this form of torture in Plate 10 (see further, below).

A third form of torture required four piercings, two over the shoulder blades, and one on each breast. Four stout saplings were planted in the ground about eight feet apart, marking a square, and a rope from one sapling was tied to each of the four pierced skewers, forcing the dancer onto his toes as he was tautly suspended from the four points. Only when his sagging weight increased the play in the ropes, could he struggle sufficiently against them to tear himself free. This might take many hours. One drawing in the Detroit collection depicts this form of Sun Dance sacrifice.

In the fourth and best-known form of flesh sacrifice, a dancer was pierced through the skin of each breast. Ropes tied to the

two skewers were attached to the top of the Center Pole, and the dancer strained back against these bonds, until the wounds tore through. Bone Shirt depicts this type of sacrifice in Plate 21.

The first six drawings in this collection are distinguished by a green ground line under the feet of the subjects, representing the renewed, and grass-covered Earth. Bone Shirt returns to this convention in Plates 27-30.

PLATES, BY CATEGORY

Charging the Tree: 13, 14, 15, & 16
Soothing the Ground Dance: 3, 4, 5, 6, 18, & 19
Sun Dance *Itancans*: 7, 8, & 9
Buffalo Dancers: 1, 2, 11 (steer), 12, & 17
Sweat Lodge Ceremony: 20 & 22
Male Sun Dancers: 10 & 21
Female Sun Dancers: 27, 28, 29, & 30
Women Leading Giveaway Horses: 23, 24, 25, & 26

Charging the Tree — Plates 13, 14, 15 & 16

Elaborate ceremonies were associated with the selection and felling of the tree used as the Center Pole for the Sun Dance Lodge. It represented an enemy, surrounded, cut down, dismembered and carried into the camp. The *Itancans* had selected and marked the tree they wanted beforehand; but on the morning of the second day of the ceremony four distinguished warriors were selected as scouts to ride out and "discover" the enemy. Four of the Bone Shirt drawings in the collection at Detroit depict these scouts.



Figure 8. Details of Plates, showing the very subtle color patterns achieved by Bone Shirt.

"Drums beating and drummers singing, the scouts form in single file and ride four times around the [camp circle], then away toward the timber, accompanied for a distance by a legion of horsemen dashing around and around them" (Curtis, 1908: 91-92). Perhaps half a mile from the camp the crowd of riders halted, to wait while the scouts proceeded on to locate the "enemy", and mark the tree with paint or banners. After a while, the scouts were seen returning toward the crowd of mounted men, who represented the members of a war party. When the approaching scouts directed their horses in a zigzag movement, which signaled an enemy had been sighted, "with one impulse the restless steeds of the impatiently waiting young men leap toward the returning party, sweeping around them four times in a great, seething circle. Then back wheels the whole tumultuous horde, thundering down upon the 'enemy.' War-bonnets stream; weapons are brandished aloft; horses strain eagerly forward. Loud and shrill the war cry fills the air. For the moment the most ardent wish of every horseman is to reach the goal first, and no risk of reckless riding is too great to be taken in the effort, for he who

is first to strike [the tree]...feels himself assured of achieving an honor of the highest class in his next battle" (Curtis, 1908: 92).

Plates 13-16 in the Mead Collection are devoted to showing individuals participating in this charge on the cottonwood tree that would become the Center Pole of the Sun Dance Lodge. Note that all of the horses have been elaborately painted, as they would be for war. Two have a scalp suspended below the bit; and two others have a silk scarf in this location.

The shields in Plates 14 & 15 are painted with larval insect forms, which will be discussed in the section on "Sun Dance Itancans". Here, we need only note that these distinctive talismans identify their bearers as acolytes of Bone Shirt, and demonstrate that he was a noted shield maker, among his other abilities.

These are clients of his services, probably relatives from the Two Strike *tiyóspaye*. The trailing double sash depicted in Plate 15 is an insignia of the Miwatanni warrior society. Similar sashes are shown in Plate 20 and Fig. 9.

There are three, similar compositions in the Detroit collection; one at Missoula; and at least two in the Gilcrease collection.

Smoothing the Ground Dance — Plates 3, 4, 5, 6, 18 & 19

After the Center Pole had been cut down, carried into the camp, and erected in the Sun Dance Lodge, a final labor was necessary to level the ground, and prepare it for the bare feet of the votaries who would commune there.

Wisely, the Sioux turn a *community labor project into a party*. "[The] men have painted their faces, and donned war-bonnets and scalp-shirts, if they have attained to that dignity. At the cry of the herald these come trooping into the lodge in single file for the performance of the Dance That Smooths the Ground. As the musicians drum and sing, the participants dance toward the pole... retreating and advancing alternately..." (Curtis, 1908: 94). "The warriors should continue to dance the victory-dance, stomping and striking uneven places on the uncovered



Figure 9. Miniconjou Lakota member of the *Miwatanni* Warrior Society. Note the distinctive headdress and trailing sash of wool cloth (seen crossing the chest diagonally), which are characteristic of this organization. Similar sashes are depicted in Plates 15 & 20. Unknown photographer at Cherry Creek, South Dakota, September, 1909; Rosemary Lessard Collection.

space [the large, central area within the shaded perimeter] until it is made sufficiently level to dance upon easily" (Wissler, 1917: 110). In a short time, several hundred men enthusiastically dancing over an area will have trampled any clods, and leveled the grass and weeds. That is what Bone Shirt has depicted in this series of plates. Note that the elaborately depicted cloth awnings denote that the locale is within the Sun Dance Lodge.

According to Walker (1917: 109), it was during the Smoothing the Ground Dance that rawhide effigies representing a male enemy, a buffalo and sometimes a horse, which had been hung to the Center Pole, were brought down by a volley of arrows and gunfire. These symbolized tribal success in warfare, hunting and raiding during the coming season. The enemy and horse effigies are shown by Bone Shirt in Plate 10. Actual effigies of this type are shown in Fig. 10. All three were used in the 1882 ceremony depicted in Fig. 6.

In one of the drawings at Missoula, and another at Detroit, Bone Shirt depicted the enemy and buffalo effigies hanging from the Center Pole. In another drawing at Detroit, he shows

a rawhide horse effigy hanging from the wrist of a Sun Dancer, perhaps the man who succeeded in shooting it down during the Smoothing the Ground Dance.

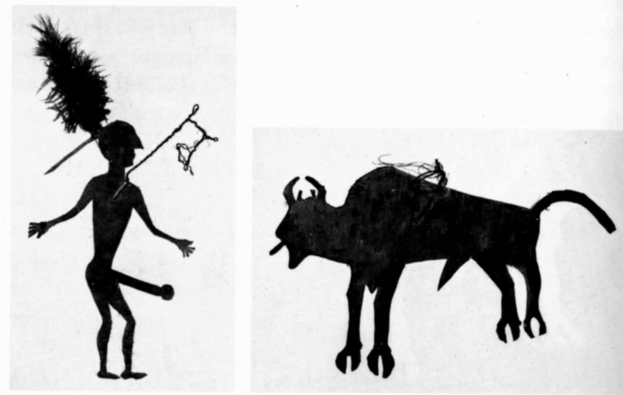


Figure 10. Painted, rawhide cut-outs representing a buffalo and a male enemy. These were obtained in 1882 by the ethnologist Alice C. Fletcher, at the Oglala Sun Dance ceremony shown in Fig. 6. Courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, USA, Cat. Nos.: buffalo, 82-45-10/27497; male enemy, 82-45-10/27498.

Sun Dance Itancans — Plates 7, 8, 9 & 10

In Plates 7 - 9, and perhaps Plate 10, Bone shirt depicted *Itancans*, or leaders of the Sun Dance ceremony. Their hair is flowing loose, each is naked except for a colorful and costly cloth skirt wrapped around his lower body, and each would be dancing barefoot. The upper body of each man is elaborately painted. Although the design employed by each is unique, the first three feature similar insect depictions which indicate either that the same visionary painted them all; or that these are three depictions on different days of the same man who had painted himself. It is nearly a certainty that this painting of the dancers' bodies was done by Bone Shirt, and this is the strongest direct evidence that he was, in fact, an *Itancan*. Similar insect figures appear prominently throughout all four of the Bone Shirt collections, on war shields and robes as well as body paint, indicating a broad clientele, each of whom would have paid the visionary artist for his services.

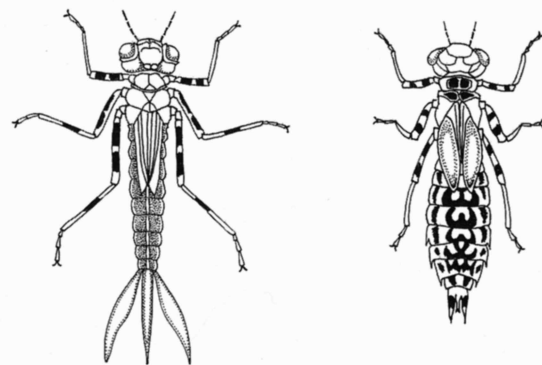


Figure 11a & b. Mayfly and dragonfly nymphs, which are the insect figures depicted by Bone Shirt in Plates 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 20, 27, & 28. Note the tail appendages, which are gills in the larval forms, allowing them to breathe under water. Drawings by author.

What these insects represent are the nymph forms of dragonflies and related species (Fig. 11a & b). Lakotas were, and remain, very close observers of the natural world around them. Among the mind-boggling mysteries of our environment are

creatures which transcend different physical realms, in ways that human beings cannot. Lakota religious philosophers observed that dragonflies began their existence in the water, as crawling creatures which could neither fly, nor survive if taken into the open air. Yet as they matured, these seeming "lowly" entities one day would crawl out of the water, attach themselves to some reed, then "die". Their whole body would crack open, and apparently remain as a husk attached to the reed; but from within would emerge a *new*, air-breathing form of being with wings, that could dodge erratically, was almost untouchable, and hence nearly invulnerable. This metaphor of "life coming from death," and its evasive abilities, made the dragonfly in its various forms a potent protective symbol, of deep significance to warriors who risked themselves in battle; or who in the Sun Dance would thirst and nearly die for two days together. It is clear from his many drawings that Bone Shirt had established a visionary understanding of this transformative power, and many other Lakotas sought his assistance and advice in acquiring the same.

In Plates 7 & 8, adult dragonflies are painted flying outward along the arms; while the nymph forms are depicted on the torso. The forked appendages shown at the tail are diagnostic of what these insect forms really are: they represent the gills which allow the nymph to breath underwater. In Plate 9, the nymphs are shown painted on the arms. In Plate 28, three underwater nymphs are painted on the green half of a robe, while three adult dragonflies soar in yellow sunlight. The dragonfly's lesson of Life in triumph over Death infuses the war shields shown in Plates 14, 15 & 20. A similar ensign appears in the Gilcrease collection.

Buffalo Dancers — Plates 1, 2, 11 (steer), 12 & 17

The Sun Dance, as has been noted, is a difficult physical challenge for those who participate. Frequent periods of brief rest are required, for the dancers to husband their strength, and recuperate a bit before the next trial. During these intermissions, various of the Lakota "dream" societies might enact their visions for the benefit of the spectators. This was part street theater and also, in a society that survived by hunting, an important promise of survival and future success. It was believed that game animals voluntarily sacrificed themselves for their "relatives", the Lakota people. Other tribes believed the same, with themselves as the beneficiaries. Men who were successful hunters had therefore been "adopted" by the prey, and to such men their animal brethren often sent dreams of successful hunts, which were considered as promises waiting to be fulfilled. These fortunate dreamers shared this intelligence with their neighbors by donning costumes of the adoptive animals, and pantomiming the progress and expected outcome of the anticipated chase. One of the primary accounts of Lakota mystical associations notes:

Buffalo Cult

There was a group of men and occasionally a few women, known as the *Buffalo Dreamers*...In the regular ceremonies while the drumming is going on, the members bellow like buffalo and some stamp a foot leaving buffalo tracks upon the ground (Wissler, 1912: 91-92).

Black Elk, a Buffalo Dreamer, recalled: "I had horns on, and was painted red all over my body...The people were all eager to see me. In this act I represented the relationship between the people and the buffalo. From the buffalo, people had reared their children up. I went around acting like [a] buffalo..." (Neihardt, 1984: 240-41).

This is precisely what Bone Shirt has depicted in Plates 1, 2, 12 & 17 of this collection. The buffalo tracks mentioned by

Wissler are painted in Plate 1 on the dancer's legs, showing that the prey have consented to follow him. The lightning bolts painted on his arms denote his ability to dispatch them. Those among the spectators who wisely follow him whenever the hunt is later announced, will share in the largesse he has been promised. The Lakota People, relatives of the Buffalo Nation, will survive.

In such performances "a shaman would appear in the head and skin of a buffalo [Plate 2]. As he ran about the camp a nude young man stalked him, while the [other buffalo dancers] followed singing. At the proper time the hunter discharged an arrow deeply into a spot marked on the buffalo skin. The shaman would then stagger, vomit blood and spit up an arrow point...Later, another shaman would use [herbal] medicine (*pejuta*), pull the arrow out and at once the wound was healed" (Wissler, 1912: 91; see also the graphic depiction in *Bad Heart Bull*, 1967: 277).

If an extensive animal-drive pantomime with many actors was necessary, such a performance was staged outside the Sun Dance lodge, as shown in a panoramic drawing by the Oglala, Standing Bear (Powell, 1992: Fig. 2). The crowd simply followed the actors "outside", then returned to the Sun Dance lodge when the main ceremony resumed. Bone Shirt's drawings make clear that similar performances by one or only a few visionaries also occurred within the lodge itself. This is denoted specifically by the overhead panels of colored cloth in Plates 1, 2 & 17 (where the edge of the cloth is indicated, but not colored in). The Buffalo Dreamer shown in Plate 12 apparently performed outside the Sun Dance lodge. The fact that five drawings depicting these animal dancers are scattered among seventeen compositions probably indicates that they occurred separately, perhaps on different days. Plate 12 documents a "Long-horn Cow Dreamer", an innovation of the late-1880s, when such cattle were being imported to the Sioux reservations (see the 1889 photographs in Hamilton & Hamilton, 1971: 98-100, for examples at Rosebud).

Three other Buffalo Dancers are shown in the Bone Shirt Collection at Missoula, in combination with two Elk Dancers. Black Tail Deer (mule deer) Dancers appear in the collections at Missoula, Detroit and Tulsa. Each of these groups, as well as heyokas, or Thunder Dreamers, who are the sacred clowns of Lakota society, performed during intermissions in the main ceremony.

Sweat Lodge Ceremony — Plates 20 & 22

"On the morning of the Sun Dance those who were to take part in the ceremony were allowed to eat a full meal, after which they entered the vapor lodge while the following song was sung:

A voice I will send.
Hear me.
All over the land I am sending my voice.
Hear me.
I will survive."

The *Inipi* or Sweat Lodge ceremony is in itself another of the seven sacred rites of the Lakota People, always performed before engaging in one of the more elaborate rituals (Powers, 1977: 89-91; Brown, 1953: 31-43). Its purpose is to cleanse an individual, both inside and out. The framework of the structure is created from green willow withes stuck into the ground, bent into supporting arcs, then lashed together. After the frame was covered with buffalo robes, or later with canvas or quilts, stones heated red-hot were carried inside, and dashed with cold water, producing effusive clouds of purifying steam. With a ground covering of aromatic sage plants, the effect is much like the inhalation therapy of the present day, though more effective.

The domed shape of the sweat lodge is shown at the lower

left in **Plate 22**. Behind the structure rises a sapling to which are suspended an offering of blue cloth, and a cylindrical container of painted parfleche (semi-tanned rawhide), of the sort often used to protect and transport personal talismans worn into combat. One of the votaries huddled within the ceremonial structure has hung it aloft to be infused with the empowering essence of the Sun.

Occupying the center of the composition is an elaborately painted horse that has an expensive silver bridle and Mexican trade bit with *coscojo* suspensions. A costly blanket of blue wool cloth with a decorative strip of beadwork is draped over the horse's back. This animal, having been blessed by the prayers offered within the sweat lodge, will later be taken into the center of the Sun Dance Lodge, and perhaps tied to the rope by which its owner has been pierced, so that its struggles may aid him in tearing free. Afterward, some deserving elder will be called forth by the dancer's family, and this horse, together with its expensive outfit, will be given away to commemorate the dancer's sacrifice. Such a presentation, with two horses, is occurring in the 1882 photograph shown in **Fig. 6**.

Before the reservation period, immediately following the Sun Dance ceremony war parties would depart in all directions. One purpose of the ceremony was to "recharge" the weapons and protective insignia of the various warrior societies, before their owners carried these against the enemy. In **Plate 20**, an otter-wrapped "crooked lance" of the *Cante T'inza*, or Strong Heart society, is shown at the right; and at the left is a sash and war shield of a member of the *Miwatanni* society (compare **Fig. 9**). This drawing is probably associated with the sweat lodge ceremony, the insignia being arrayed near the domed structure during that prayer ceremony, like the elevated parfleche case shown in **Plate 22**.

Male Sun Dancers — Plates 10 & 21

"...After their vapor bath, the dancers were painted by the men whom they had selected for that purpose" (Densmore, 1918: 123-124). Wissler was told "Each Mentor should paint his candidate's feet and hands red. Then he should place the symbolic color of the Sky on him so as to indicate the form of the dance he is to do. If he is to dance the second form [dragging buffalo skulls], a stripe of blue should be painted across his shoulders..." (Wissler, 1917: 112). This is what Bone Shirt has depicted in **Plate 10**. It is not clear whether this man is an *Itancan*, or one of the dancers. It was not uncommon for an *Itancan* also to perform one of the sacrifices, so this individual may fill both categories. His body is painted red, as Wissler specifies, and the blue stripes on his shoulders show where he will be pierced in the back with wooden skewers to which ropes will be attached, and heavy buffalo skulls, which he then will drag around inside the circular Sun Dance Lodge, until the splints tear out of his skin.

Plate 10 is an innovative composition, combining both lateral and overhead perspectives of the action. The dancer, Center Pole and offering banners are seen in lateral view; while the right ¼ of the drawing shows from overhead the curved, inner edge of the open dance area, with the panels of colored cloth forming the perimeter awnings extending to the right.

The dancer shown in **Plate 21** has been pierced through the skin of each breast with wooden skewers. Rawhide ropes attached to these bind him to the Center Pole. His sacrifice shall be to pull back against these wounds, until the skewers tear loose. Rather than being painted red, the priest who dedicated this man has covered him in the yellow paint which represents the Sun. Blood from the wounds streaks down his torso. The offering banners probably are his personal gifts, placed before he began the

sacrifice. When he has torn free, these will be gathered up and laid at the foot of the Center pole, as shown in **Fig. 6**, making way for the next votary.

Here, Bone Shirt includes another important detail of the ceremony, the tribal offering which was tied into the fork of the Center Pole, before it was raised into position. This bundle was composed of "four times four wands of chokecherry wood [representing a prayer for bountiful fruits], and enclosing...a wisp of sage [and] sweetgrass [sacramental plants that figure prominently in all Lakota ceremonies], and a tuft of shed buffalo hair [representing the essence or spirit of all buffalo, which were believed attracted by a ceremony sincerely performed]" (Wissler, 1917: 109).

Female Sun Dancers — Plates 27, 28, 29 & 30

"Women sometimes took part in the Sun Dance by fasting and standing beside some relative who was dancing, or by assuming part of the obligation of a vow made by some relative and permitting their arms to be cut...Women whose relatives were fulfilling vows [by being pierced during the ceremony] frequently danced beside them during part of the time. *Tásinaskawin* (White Robe) [took] part in a Sun Dance in which her brother was fulfilling a vow. As the result of a successful raid against the Crows, he brought home many horses which were divided among his relatives, she receiving part of the number. He had vowed that if he were successful he would be suspended from the pole and would also have 200 cuts made on his arms. She and her sister assumed one half of this number, each having her arms cut fifty times. She and his other female relatives danced while he was dancing" (Densmore, 1918: 132 & 135).

All four of these women are wearing horned headdresses characteristic of the *Cante T'inza*, or Strong Heart, warrior society. This means that the male relatives whom they are supporting by their presence belong to that organization, and the women are in turn being simultaneously honored for their assistance by temporarily being allowed to wear this war clothing. Since Bone Shirt has here depicted four family members of the *Cante T'inza*, it is likely that he was himself also a member.

In **Plates 28 & 29**, leafy saplings are shown erected at the left, and the small dots throughout the leaves represent tiny offerings of tobacco tied in small pieces of cloth. In **Plate 30**, similar tobacco offerings wrapped in blue cloth are tied to a sheaf of sticks, and this is hung together with a banner painted with horse tracks which represents an ardent prayer for success in acquiring the same. At the conclusion of the ceremony these would be laid at the foot of the Center Pole.

The forked implements hung with eagle feathers and offering banners in **Plates 28-30** represent the badge of office of a young boy appointed as "water carrier" for a war party during his first venture into the dangerous business of being a warrior. A small "bucket" made from the pericardium of a buffalo was laced to the open, forked end of such a staff. With this tool the eager young lad would dip water from every creek or spring the party encountered, and carry it around to refresh his seniors. It was a proud badge of maturity (see Wissler, 1912: 60; and Bad Heart Bull, 1967: 111). In any battle, the "water boy" might use his emblem to count coup on any enemy encountered. If he enjoyed success, he might choose to use a similar implement in battle throughout his career, for luck. Here, the warriors to whom these ensigns belong have erected them while they pay, in blood, for past or future success.

Women Leading Giveaway Horses — Plates 23, 24, 25 & 26

"The gifts distributed by relatives of the dancers and the feasts given in their honor were also the work of the women" (Densmore, 1918: 132). The family of every Sun Dancer staged elaborate giveaways to distinguish their relative, and fix his particular sacrifice in the community's memory. What is depicted in these four drawings are women hauling these expensive gifts to the vicinity of the Sun Dance Lodge, where a herald would call out the names of those invited, and the presentations would be made before hundreds of surrounding witnesses. Two of the horses are dragging tipi poles, indicating that decorated lodges, as well as the horses—in effect, "a house and a car"—will be part of the presentation. Each horse has a decorated saddle and crupper. Pairs of beaded, soft-leather storage bags atop the saddles hold prestigious gifts, such as quill or bead-decorated clothing, and feather headdresses. Painted parfleche cases slung at the horses' sides would hold additional gifts, or dried foods such as pemmican and chokecherry cakes, for a traditional feast. The woman in **Plate 26** is carrying a rolled-up backrest—a traditional "chair"—across her back. Note that the horse depicted in **Plate 25** with a dark mane is a dun roan: a yellow phase with black points. The stripes indicated on the legs are natural "war paint" of the Spanish Barb, very much coveted by Lakota horsemen.

A POSSIBLE PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

Figure 12 shows an unidentified Brule Lakota man traveling with the Pawnee Bill Wild West Show in 1908. Junior Bone Shirt was 52 years of age in that year. His younger brother was a member of the troupe (**Fig. 1**), and Junior is known to have traveled with Pawnee Bill previously. An 1894 list of ration recipients at Rosebud Reservation, for example, shows him as then absent, with the Pawnee Bill Show. If Junior Bone Shirt was with his brother in 1908, this portrait shows the only unidentified member of the troupe who is old enough. There is a strong

similarity between the face of this man, and the younger Bone Shirt. Compare especially their noses and mouths, and the lines in the cheeks enclosing those features. It is possible, therefore, that this man was the artist of the drawings considered here.

CONCLUSION

His family named him Never Misses, a hopeful invocation of success both in hunting and in war. By the quality of his life, the eldest son of Bone Shirt earned honor of another kind, to light his name across the ages. With unerring skill in creating this comprehensive record of his people's greatest



Figure 12. Unidentified Brule Lakota man traveling with the Pawnee Bill Wild West show in June, 1908. Photo by Erwin E. Smith, at Boston, Massachusetts. Erwin E. Smith Collection of the Library of Congress on Deposit at the Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas, Neg. Nos. LC-S611-808 and LC-S611-810. For reasons discussed in the essay, it is possible this man is Junior Bone Shirt, creator of the drawings considered here.

religious ceremony, the artist truly "never missed." A leader and innovator of his own generation, he found a way to outdistance Time and Death, preserving the knowledge that had informed his own life, and passing it down with skill and rare beauty, to Lakota generations yet unborn.

— Mike Cowdrey
San Luis Obispo, California

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