Case 12-US-SD-Winter Count-Lone Dog-1870

# The Atlantica Winter Count by Lone Dog, a Yanktonai Lakota



Lithograph of Capt. Garrick Mallery’s photograph of Second Lieut. Hugh T. Reed, First United States Infantry’s copy of Lone Dog’s Winter count (Mallery 1877).

“Winter Count” is the English for the Lakota ***Waniyetu******wowapi*.**  ***Waniyetu* refers to the Lakota custom of measuring a year** from the first snowfall to first snowfall. *W****owap*i** refers to “that which can be read or counted” of the most memorable, notable or unusual events of this period. These events are identified by a pictograph drawn by a Lakota historian or ***tiyospaye***. Originally, these pictographs were painted in a spiral on buffalo hide. Lakota winter counts cover periods of time spanning from 1700 to 1919.

History of the Lone Dog Winter Count

Lone Dog (*Shuuka-ishnala*), was a Yanktonai Lakota living c 1870 near where Fort Peck would later be established. There he met Basil Clément, a French fur-trader at Fort Sully whose wife was a daughter of Peter Sarpy, a Mexican-Indian fur trader at the American Fur Company Post at Rapid Creek, Dakota Territory (Deland 1922: 282-3).

It was very unusual for a Lakota historian of a Winter Count to sell his own original, but Clément probably offered Lone Dog an amount he could not refuse and so he finally relented and sold it to Clément together with a list of the meanings of the pictographs. Second Lieut. Hugh T. Reed, First United States Infantry, who was stationed at the Brule Agency, not far from Ft. Sully (Smith 1915:1076), heard of Clément’s copy of Lone Dog’s Winter Count and contacted him at Ft. Sully, where Clément was trading. Clément allowed him to copy it on a strip of cotton cloth, one-yard square.

Reed met Capt. Garrick Mallery, of the U. S. Infantry Signal Corps. who was stationed at Ft. Sully. Mallery was then developing an interest in Native American sign language, petroglyphs and pictographs. Reed related his story of having copied Clément’s copy of Lone Dog’s Winter Count and Mallery was fascinated. He borrowed Reed’s copy and photographed it. He published a lithograph of this photograph in 1877 through the U. S. Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories under the editorship of geologist Ferdinand Vandeveer Hayden (1829-1887.

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