

## NEW WORDS:

proclaim  
departure  
migratory  
appearance  
bargain  
delivered  
pursuers  
lynx  
cautiously  
winded  
spokesman  
stationed  
midday  
tripod  
representative  
crier  
entrance  
message

## HOW THE SUMMER SEASON CAME

Developed by the Assiniboine Elders Board  
of the Fort Belknap Reservation

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA: Plains Region

STORY TYPE(S): Natural Phenomena/Indian Values

### Summary:

Long ago the Assiniboine people lived in a land covered with snow all year. They were unhappy with so many cold months. Council members devised a plan in which the fastest animals would steal summer from a guarded lodge far to the south. With summer finally in the possession of the Assiniboine, an agreement was reached to share the season equally with the horsemen of the south. Cranes eventually were chosen to exchange the season every six months. This created the gradual change of seasons which now includes fall and spring.

This story gives an explanation of the origin of the seasons. It also provides an introduction for developing the concept of "Indian time." Traditionally, the concept of time was relative to the moon's cycle. Contrast this to the measurement of time by calendar years' months, days or minutes, etc. Instead of saying, "I'll meet you when the moon is full," or "I'll meet you at dawn," we say, "I'll meet you on the fifteenth" or "I'll meet you at 7:30 a.m." Time used to be relative to natural events and was therefore flexible. With minutes and seconds time is much more exact. Because of this, time for many Indian people has not been viewed in a futuristic sense as in planning or saving it.

### Teacher Guided Activities:



1. As a group, decide on a name for each month of the year which is descriptive of the environmental changes during that month. Obtain copies of an Indian calendar and compare names. Make your own room calendar, having students make appropriate illustrations for each month. (Example: February - Big Snow Moon (or month).



2. Before dividing into Four Winds groups assign each group one of the four seasons. The group's task is to list as many descriptive words or phrases as possible which come to mind when thinking of each season. Include feelings about the seasons as well.

Example: Spring is

rainy · flowers in bloom · boots in the mud, etc.

Have students return to the Council Lodge and share seasonal impressions with the class.

Following the Student Activity Card is a list of optional activities which you may want to reproduce for student use.





**Student Activity Card(s):**

**See Wintercount Card (6A-6B) and Pictographs Card (6C-6D).**

Read through the Wintercount card with students. Before having the Four Winds groups try the three activities listed on the front side of the card, share the following information with them:


A wintercount keeps track of time by telling a story of the changes which take place in the environment (how the ground moves). There are four major changes in the environment every year, starting with the ground appearing each spring. The next changes come with the summer, then fall, and finally winter.

A pictographic symbol was added to a wintercount during the time when the ground started to appear. The pictographs used for the seasons are shown below.

ground appearing, spring	
summer	
fall	
winter	

Whatever happened between the ground appearing (or spring) until the ground appeared again (the following spring) is the length of a calendar year. A pictograph was chosen to keep track of that time. The pictograph represents something especially significant or outstanding that happened that year. Perhaps a lot of snow might be shown like this. Notice the short legs of the man and horse.



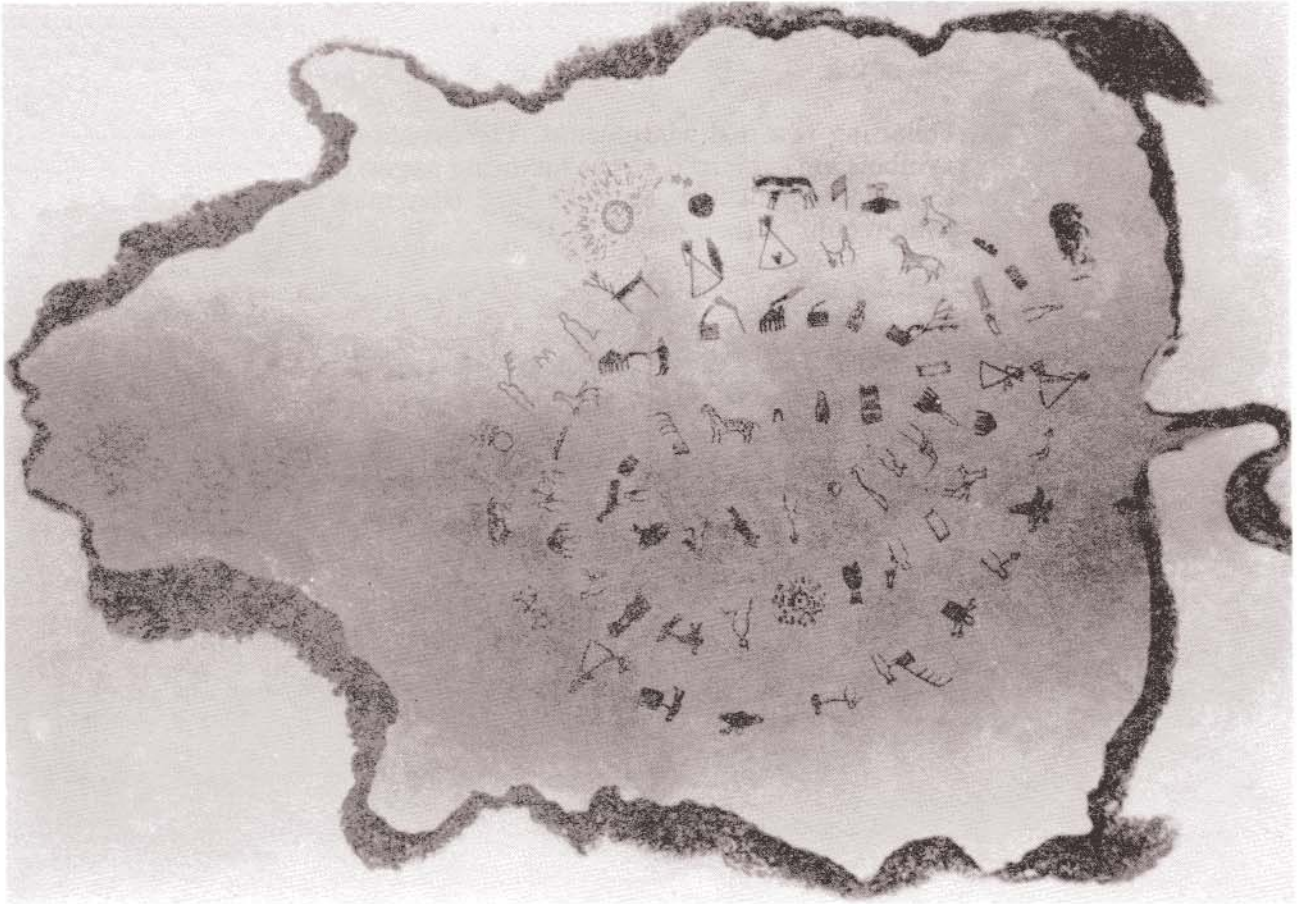
Maybe a late frost killed all the plums  so there were no plums for the winter.

Wintercounts tell the story of a significant event which happened each year. Seeing the pictographs the keepers of the hide were able to tell the people their history.

Remember a pictograph is not a word for word translation. Rather each pictograph represents an entire phrase, sentence, event, thought or concept. Pictographs are just enough of a sketch with very little or no detail shown. A wintercount or painted hide has no background. You will not see trees, clouds, ground or sky. If you see these things it is a picture but not a pictograph.

In later years some wintercounts were changed to read from right to left, and some were transferred to cloth or paper notebooks using colored pencils or ink.

Following is a real wintercount. The events depicted with pictographic symbols are explained on the following pages. Once students understand this wintercount kept by Lone Dog, they may be better able to keep a wintercount of their own.



**PHOTO: LONE DOG'S WINTERCOUNT**

Following is an English translation of the individual years represented and a description of pictographs.

## DAKOTA CALENDAR OR WINTERCOUNT KEPT BY LONE DOG

- 1801-1802. A human being with many marks always was the sign of an epidemic of some disease such as smallpox or measles. The interpretation is "many died of Small Pox."
- 1802-1803. The horseshoe used to indicate that the Dacotahs saw shod horses probably stolen from the Pawnees who stole them from the white men further down the Missouri.
- 1803-1804. They stole "curly horses," horses with curly hides from the Crows.
- 1804-1805. They had a Calumet dance and then went off on a War expedition.
- 1805-1806. Eight Dacotahs killed in a foray against the Crows. Straight lines.
- 1806-1807. A Dacotah kills an Arikara just as he was about to capture an eagle. The red mark on shoulder indicates a wound.
- 1807-1808. The Dacotah who killed the Arikara in 1806-1807 was himself killed by Rees. (This is a short name for Arikara.)
- 1808-1809. Little Beaver, "Loisel, a Frenchman" who had a fur post near DeGrev, east of Pierre on the Missouri, lost his post by fire. In this case the symbol was for "Little Beaver" only. Others show the beaver plus a burning log building.
- 1810-1811. Has to do with a medicine man, the symbol is a white buffalo skull over his head. Black Stone or Black Rock was the medicine man.
- 1811-1812. The circle is a dirt lodge, the interior circles heads. Interpreted, it is that 27 Arikaras or Mandans were killed in a dirt lodge by the Dakotahs.
- 1812-1813. The device is a laso. It signifies that "wild horses" were caught.
- 1813-1814. Whooping Cough killed man. The device is a head with a blast coming from it.
- 1814-1815. A Dacotah kills an Arapahoe with a stroke on the head from an axe causing a great flow of blood. Once understood, it is very typical and symbolic.
- 1815-1816. The Sans Arcs make a dirt lodge at Peoria Bottom, near Pierre. The Arc or bow over the symbol of a dirt lodge.
- 1816-1817. Buffalo were plenty. A crude buffalo hide is the symbol.
- 1817-1818. A trade post of dry timber was built at Ft. Pierre. This was by Joseph LaFrombois. The symbology is perfect.
- 1818-1819. This was a Measles Epidemic. Smallpox, you will note, has larger marks on a human body.
- 1819-1820. Another trade post. This one by La Conte also at Ft. Pierre.
- 1820-1821. Another dirt lodge. This was one by Two Arrows and the streamer indicates that La

Conte decorated Two Arrows for Bravery.

1821-1822. A star with a tail, a meteor, was to be seen; actually there was a great display of meteors that winter and it was used in many counts.

1822-1823. Another log cabin, trade store, at Ft. Pierre. This was probably Ft. Tecumseh.

1823-1824. Leavenworth uses a cannon to fire on the Arikara dirt lodges up north of Grand River. The white man with a hat, fires at a dirt lodge, highly symbolic.

1824-1825. Swan, a Minneconjou, had 20 horses killed by a man who was mad at him. The lance and blood show the method.

1825-1826. In a Big Flood on the Missouri many were drowned. The heads above the straight line which was the water level depicts the event.

1826-1827. Indians who ate a buffalo carcass died and before death a strange substance issued from their mouths. The line so depicts.

1827-1828. Dead Arm, a Dacotah was stabbed by a Mandan and lost lots of blood. The arm, the dirt, the blood are all shown.

1828-1829. A white man, with a hat, built a trading post. Some say it was Chadron at the mouth of the Belle Fourche.

1829-1830. Bad Spike kills an Indian with an arrow.

1830-1831. In a battle, man with a bonnet, many were killed by the Crows. One interpretation says 23 Dacotahs. But there are no straight lines, departure if that many were actually killed.

1831-1832. One white man, both with hats kill another. This was Laboue who killed Quenel at Cherry Creek.

1832-1833. Lone Horn, shown on head, had his leg broken on a buffalo hunt.

1833-1834. Another meteor shower. This was well-known having been observed at many places in the United States on November 12th.

1834-1835. Medicine Hide, a chief was killed. The red shirt shows the bloody nature of the affair.

1835-1836. Lame Deer shot a Crow with an arrow, pulled it out and shot him again. This peculiar circumstance, most unusual, was deemed worthy of a place on the calendar record.

1836-1837. Plenty of buffalo again but this time it is interpreted as the Breast; Chief of the Two Kettles died. It's hard to make sense of this one.

1837-1838. One hundred elk killed on a big hunt. Clearly not a horse, the lance or arrow tells the story.

1838-1839. Iron Horn, built himself a dirt lodge on the Moreau. There is nothing to connect him with the first lodge but that was a fact.

- 1839-1840. A Snake encampment of lodges was attacked and the inhabitants of 20 lodges were killed. The tipis plus the arrows tell of the attack.
- 1840-1841. The Dacotahs make peace with the Cheyennes; extended hands are symbolic.
- 1841-1842. Feather in His Ear stole 30 spotted horses. Note the difference between a spotted and a curly horse (1804).
- 1842-1843. One Feather tried to make up a War Party against the Crows but he failed to persuade the young men to go. Perhaps the pipe upside down denotes his failure.
- 1843-1844. Buffalo were scarce and the Sans Arcs made medicine, see skull on tipi trying to bring them in.
- 1844-1845. Minneconjous built a pine fort. The pine tree connected with a tipi shows the construction.
- 1845-1846. Plenty of buffalo meat, hung from trees and poles to dry.
- 1846-1847. Broken Leg, a Brule died. The broken leg is the only symbolic part of this one and the fact that there was a Brule named Broken Leg authenticates the story.
- 1847-1848. Two Man was killed, the two small figures side by side are the symbology.
- 1848-1849. Hump Back was killed; the lance and the hump back are quite apparent.
- 1849-1850. The Crows stole a great number of horses from the Brule. The circle with the departing hoof marks tell the story.
- 1850-1851. Old woman found in a buffalo. Perhaps an old woman who was sent off to die alone found shelter in an old buffalo carcass.
- 1851-1852. Peace made with the Crows. Crows are always shown with either a forelock of hair or a hair symbol. This is quite a plain piece of symbology.
- 1852-1853. Some foreign Indians came to Lone Horn's lodge on a peaceful mission at night. The black is on the tipi and the pipe does not touch the tipi.
- 1853-1854. Striped blankets brought by white men to the Indians. Probably an issue of Spanish blankets at the Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1852.
- 1854-1855. Black Bear was killed by the Blackfeet. Just how this signifies Black Bear or the Blackfeet is not certain but the material hanging from the arms was perhaps typical of some article of Blackfeet (Montana) dress.
- 1855-1856. General Harney, with a hat, makes a Treaty, extended hands. This was Ft. Pierre in the spring of 1856.
- 1856-1857. Four Horns (on the head) a medicine Man, (Calumet), became such.
- 1857-1858. A Crow Woman killed by Dacotahs, dress shows Crow Design and arrows, wounds or death.

**1858-1859.** One Horn (on the head) makes medicine (buffalo skull). This was quite a symbol of medicine (wakan).

**1859-1860.** Big Crow, killed by the Crows. Black Crow pierced by arrow.

**1861-1862.** Buffalo very plenty. They came up to the tipis. Most counts show cloven hoof marks and this is probably an error in the copying.

**1862-1863.** Red Feather was killed. He was a Minneconjou. Other counts would indicate that perhaps Red Feather was an Assiniboine killed by the Dacotah. There are no arrows or other killing devices shown.

**1863-1864.** Eight Dacotah were killed by the Crows. Here we have the straight lines connected to show that it happened at one place.

**1864-1865.** Four Crows were killed by the Dacotahs. Their firetops were shown but not as distinctly as in many winter counts where a Crow is always to be determined by a "crew cut hair cut."

**1865-1866.** Many horses died. They were not killed as has been shown elsewhere, and the fact is they starved for want of forage.

**1866-1867.** Swan, the father of the famous Minneconjou "White Swan" died. The Swan which looks more like a bowling pin is shown over the head. The material hanging from the extended arms is not at all any clear cut symbology. (Note Brave Bear's death in 1854.)

**1867-1868.** Much medicine made. The flag indicated the Treaty negotiations out at Ft. Laramie that year.

**1868-1869.** Clearly not a buffalo but a domestic animal. This was the year the Government brought in Texas steers for beef issues in accord with the 1867 Treaty.

**1869-1870.** There was an eclipse of the sun in August 1869. Here the sun all black is shown. Just why the stars are bright and red is a bit difficult to explain. It would argue that the eclipse was of the moon and the stars still bright but the fact is the eclipse was on the sun and witnessed all over the West. The circle is a Crow fort, nearly surrounded and the weapons used were guns for it is bullets that are flying. All but one of the Crows was killed in fact and 14 Dacotahs. Neither of these facts are brought out by the symbology.



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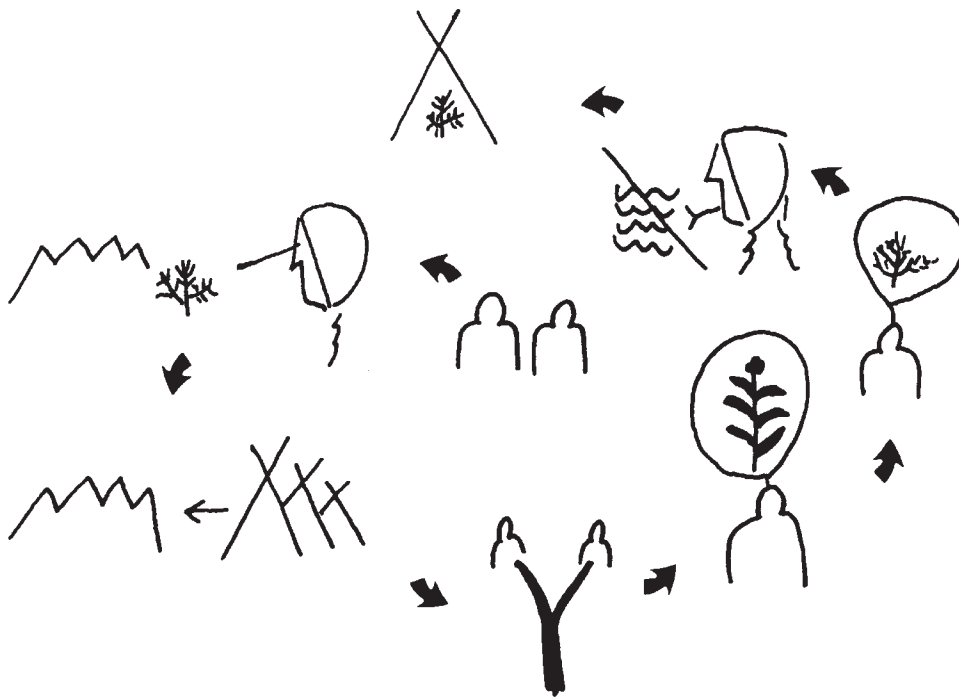
- 1** Choose your favorite season and describe the things you like to do most during your favorite season.
- 2** Make a mural or filmstrip showing a scene as it changes through the seasons.
- 3** Depending on the season your list will change. Take a walk and list as many signs of the season as possible. You may only list what you, yourself, see, hear, smell, or touch.
- 4** Make a report on the changes that animals make to get ready for each season.
- 5** Choose a place in your community; a hill, a highway, a river, etc. Write as if **you** were the place and describe yourself as you change through the seasons. Begin each line with “If I were . . .”

Think of what you see, hear, feel and smell. Are you happy, sad, excited, bored? Tell everything you can about yourself!

**6** See if you can understand the following story made with pictographs.

This is a story about how one tribe split up and became two tribes. They each practiced a religion or life style according to visions that two brothers had. These tribes are now known as the Crow of Montana who followed the way of the tobacco and the Hidatsa of North Dakota who became farmers, mainly corn growers.

Two brothers went fasting (went without water). One was shown how to use tobacco and the other was shown how to use corn. The brothers split camp. One went to the mountains and found tobacco. He was shown a way of being people. He was also shown how to use tobacco in the tepee.



The same way that a wintercount tells the story of time, other stories were also told.

