



# Smithsonian

*National Museum of Natural History*

## Guide to the photographs of Amos Bad Heart Bull drawings

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Funding for digitization of the photographs of Amos Bad Heart Bull drawings  
was provided by the Plains Indian Ledger Art Digital Publishing Project.

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Anthropological Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Photographs of Amos Bad Heart Bull drawings
<b>Date:</b>	1890-1913 1928
<b>Identifier:</b>	NAA.2013-10
<b>Creator:</b>	Bad Heart Bull, Amos, 1869-1913 Blish, Helen Heather
<b>Extent:</b>	413 Glass negatives 3 Nitrate negatives
<b>Language:</b>	Multiple languages .

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The collection was donated to the archives by the Plains Indian Ledger Art Digital Publishing Project.

### Provenance

The negatives in this collection are the original photographs of Amos Bad Heart Bull's drawings, made by Frank Shoemaker. The Shoemaker Papers at the University of Nebraska include notes referencing work for Hartley Burr Alexander, who was Helen Blish's academic advisor. In 1928, Burr left Nebraska to take a position at Scripps College in California, and evidently took the negatives with him. He made prints of selected photographs, which he published in his 1938 portfolio *Sioux Indian Painting*. Those prints, some hand colored, are among his papers deposited at the Scripps College Denison Library upon his death in 1939. The negatives were not included in the deposit. In the mid-1980s, the majority of the negatives surfaced at a garage sale in Claremont, California. In 2011, the owner of the negatives contacted the National Anthropological Archives as well as Ross Frank, Director of the Plains Indian Ledger Art Digital Publishing Project (PILA) at U.C. San Diego. Frank arranged purchase of the negatives by PILA and donated them to the NAA.

### Location of Originals

The original ledger drawings are interred with Dollie Pretty Cloud, sister of Amos Bad Heart Bull.

### Related Materials

Copies of Helen Blish's manuscript are held at the American Museum of Natural History, Division of Anthropology Archives, and the University of Nebraska Library Archives and Special Collections.

The University of Nebraska Library Archives and Special Collections holds the Frank Shoemaker papers.

The Ella Strong Denison Library at Scripps College holds the Hartley Alexander Burr papers.

## Other Finding Aids

A copy of Helen Blish's book, *A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux*, which provides detailed information on each drawing, is available in the repository.

## Restrictions

The negatives are fragile and not available for viewing. Digital surrogates are available.

## Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

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## Biographical / Historical

Amos Bad Heart Bull was born in 1869 in Dakota Territory. Given the childhood name Eagle Bonnet (Wapłłi Wapñáha), Amos was born to Bad Heart Bull (Thathánka Čanťé Šíča, c. 1846-1913) and Her Red Blanket (Thášinálútawin), also known as Gopher and Yankton Woman. His family was associated with the Soreback Band of the Oglala. He later took his father's name as a surname. He enlisted at Fort Robinson, NE as a scout for the U.S. Army in the 1890s under the name Eagle Lance. He subsequently lived in the White Clay District of the Pine Ridge Reservation, marrying a widow named Sophia in 1907. Their one child died in infancy. He died in 1913.

Helen Heather Blish was born on November 8, 1898 in Detroit, Michigan to the Reverend William Henry Blish and Jean Mary Street. Blish grew up in frequent contact with Native American people as her father worked for the Federal Indian Service at various schools throughout Blish's youth. She lived with her family at Pine Ridge Reservation from 1916-1920, when she became a fulltime student at the University of Nebraska receiving a BA in 1922 under the mentorship of Hartley Burr Alexander. After graduation, she taught school in Detroit and in Nebraska, returning to graduate school at the University of Nebraska in 1926. She received her master's degree in 1928, producing a thesis based on the Bad Heart Bull drawings. She continued intermittent work on the drawings for the next several years while also teaching in Detroit. She died in 1941.

Bad Heart Bull produced the drawings in this book over a period of years between 1890 and his death in 1913. The book then passed to his sister Dollie Pretty Cloud, who kept it for the rest of her life. It was interred with her in 1947. Helen Blish, a student at the University of Nebraska, learned of the book in 1927. She subsequently received a grant from the Carnegie Institution of Washington to support research and photography. She arranged to borrow the book from Mrs. Pretty Cloud, paying her an annual fee for its use. She took the book to Lincoln, Nebraska where it was photographed by Frank Shoemaker. Working from prints, Blish produced a substantial manuscript with interpretation of each drawing based on interviews conducted on the Pine Ridge Reservation. The fully illustrated manuscript was eventually published in 1967 by the University of Nebraska Press, with photographs provided by Blish's sister.

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## Scope and Contents

Amos Bad Heart Bull's drawings provide a broad overview of Lakota life, some of which Bad Heart Bull experienced and much that he learned about from older members of the community. Depicted are scenes of warfare, religious, domestic, and social life, hunting, ranching, and various other events and activities. Many of the drawings include inscriptions in Lakota, identifying the event or the people depicted.

The warfare drawings show preparations, the layout of the battlefield, individual engagements and battles (many with the Crow), and broader overviews of events unfolding. There is also a lengthy series of pictures depicting the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Illustrations of camp life show scenes both prior to and during life on the Pine Ridge Reservation. These include drawings of hunting and butchering buffalo, of general social life with scenes of courtship and of games, and of religious ceremonies, including the Sun Dance and the

Ghost Dance. Also shown are scenes of ranching, of Fourth of July parades and events for 1898 and 1903, and a series of pictures illustrating the regalia of a number of warrior societies.

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## **Arrangement**

The photographs are arranged in the order that the drawings appear in the original ledger.

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## **Bibliography**

Blish, Helen Heather. *A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967. Reissued 2017.