



Smithsonian

National Museum of Natural History

Guide to MS 1929-b Sitting Bull pictographic
autobiography and related material, 1882-1923

National Anthropological Archives
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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Anthropological Archives
Title:	MS 1929-b Sitting Bull pictographic autobiography and related material
Date:	1882-1923
Identifier:	NAA.MS1929B
Creator:	Sitting Bull, 1831-1890
Extent:	1 Volume (disbound and laminated; 22 drawings; pencil and watercolor; 13.25 x 8.25 inches)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Provenance

Sitting Bull drew these pictures on the leaves of an Army ledger book while he was held prisoner at Fort Randall, Dakota Territory in 1882. They were acquired at that time by Lt. Wallace Tear together with explanations from Sitting Bull of each image. Tear sent them to Gen. John C. Smith in August 1882, and they were donated to the Bureau of American Ethnology by Smith's son Robert A. Smith in 1923.

Preferred Citation

MS 1929-b Sitting Bull pictographic autobiography and related material, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of a ledger book, now partially disbound, containing twenty-two (22) drawings by Sitting Bull and related material. The drawings depict Sitting Bull's war deeds, and each image is signed by him. The scenes are not in chronological order. The drawings were made on the front leaves of the ledger book, and were removed by the Bureau of American Ethnology Archives (BAE) for lamination at an unknown date. The remaining volume has eight (8) leaves with mounted newspaper clippings about Sitting Bull, and many additional blank leaves. The collection also includes letters transmitting the ledger book as well as explanations of the drawings dictated by Sitting Bull from Wallace Tear to John C. Smith, and from Smith's son to the BAE.

Please note that the contents of the collection and the language and terminology used reflect the context and culture of the time of its creation. As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today. The information within this collection does not reflect the views of the Smithsonian Institution or National Anthropological Archives, but is available in its original form to facilitate research.

Local Numbers

NAA MS 1929B

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Apsáalooke (Crow/Absaroke)
- Assiniboine (Stoney)
- Hunkpapa Lakota (Hunkpapa Sioux)
- Sahnish (Arikara)
- Salish (Flathead)

Cultures:

- Apsáalooke (Crow/Absaroke)
- Assiniboine (Stoney)
- Hunkpapa Lakota (Hunkpapa Sioux)
- Sahnish (Arikara)
- Salish (Flathead)

Types of Materials:

- Ledger drawings
- Newsclippings
- Pictographs
- Works of art

Places:

- North America

Container Listing

Box 1929B, Folder 1	Capturing an Assiniboine 1 Drawings (visual works) Image(s): Sitting Bull drawing of him capturing an Assiniboine Notes: NAA INV 08589700 NAA MS 1929b 001
Box 1929B, Folder 1	In battle with Assiniboines 1 Drawings (visual works) Image(s): Sitting Bull drawing of him in battle with Assiniboines Notes: NAA INV 08589800 NAA MS 1929b 002
Box 1929B, Folder 1	In battle with Assiniboines 1 Drawings (visual works) Image(s): Sitting Bull drawing of him in battle with Assiniboines Notes: NAA INV 08589900 NAA MS 1929b 003
Box 1929B, Folder 1	In battle with Assiniboines 1 Drawings (visual works) Image(s): Sitting Bull drawing of him in battle with Assiniboines Notes: NAA INV 08590000 NAA MS 1929b 004
Box 1929B, Folder 1	Capturing an Assiniboine woman 1 Drawings (visual works) Image(s): Sitting Bull drawing of him capturing an Assiniboine woman Notes: NAA INV 08590100 NAA MS 1929b 005
Box 1929B, Folder 2	Capturing an Assiniboine woman 1 Drawings (visual works) Image(s): Sitting Bull drawing of him capturing an Assiniboine woman Notes: NAA INV 08590200 NAA MS 1929b 006
Box 1929B, Folder 2	Capturing an Assiniboine woman 1 Drawings (visual works) Image(s): Sitting Bull drawing of him capturing an Assiniboine woman Notes: NAA INV 08590300 NAA MS 1929b 007
Box 1929B, Folder 2	In battle with Crows

1 Drawings (visual works)
[Image\(s\): Sitting Bull drawing of him in battle with Crow Indians](#)
Notes: NAA INV 08590400
NAA MS 1929b 008

Box 1929B, Folder 2 In battle with Assiniboines
1 Drawings (visual works)
[Image\(s\): Sitting Bull drawing of him in battle with Assiniboines](#)
Notes: NAA INV 08590500
NAA MS 1929b 009

Box 1929B, Folder 2 In battle with Crows
1 Drawings (visual works)
[Image\(s\): Sitting Bull drawing of him in battle with Crow Indians](#)
Notes: NAA INV 08590600
NAA MS 1929b 010

Box 1929B, Folder 3 Capturing a Crow woman
1 Drawings (visual works)
[Image\(s\): Sitting Bull drawing of him capturing a Crow woman](#)
Notes: NAA INV 08590700
NAA MS 1929b 011

Box 1929B, Folder 3 In battle with Crows
1 Drawings (visual works)
[Image\(s\): Sitting Bull drawing of him in battle with Crow Indians](#)
Notes: NAA INV 08590800
NAA MS 1929b 012

Box 1929B, Folder 3 In battle with Crows
1 Drawings (visual works)
[Image\(s\): Sitting Bull drawing of him in battle with Crow Indians](#)
Notes: NAA INV 08590900
NAA MS 1929b 013

Box 1929B, Folder 3 Capturing Jumping Bull
1 Drawings (visual works)
[Image\(s\): Sitting Bull drawing of him capturing Jumping Bull](#)
Notes: NAA INV 08591000
NAA MS 1929b 014

Box 1929B, Folder 3 In battle with Arikaras, striking down Bull Head
1 Drawings (visual works)
[Image\(s\): Sitting Bull drawing of him in battle with Arikaras, striking down Bull Head](#)
Notes: NAA INV 08591100
NAA MS 1929b 015

Box 1929B, Folder 4 In battle with Crow scouts accompanying General Nelson A. Miles
1 Drawings (visual works)
[Image\(s\): Sitting Bull drawing of him in battle with Crow scouts accompanying General Nelson A. Miles](#)
Notes: NAA INV 08591200
NAA MS 1929b 016

Box 1929B, Folder 4 In battle with Flatheads
1 Drawings (visual works)
[Image\(s\): Sitting Bull drawing of him in battle with Flatheads](#)
Notes: NAA INV 08591300
NAA MS 1929b 017

Box 1929B, Folder 4 In battle with Crows
1 Drawings (visual works)
[Image\(s\): Sitting Bull drawing of him in battle with Crow Indians](#)
Notes: NAA INV 08591400
NAA MS 1929b 018

Box 1929B, Folder 4 In battle with Crows
1 Drawings (visual works)
[Image\(s\): Sitting Bull drawing of him in battle with Crow Indians](#)
Notes: NAA INV 08591500
NAA MS 1929b 019

Box 1929B, Folder 4 In battle with Crows
1 Drawings (visual works)
[Image\(s\): Sitting Bull drawing of him in battle with Crow Indians](#)
Notes: NAA INV 08591600
NAA MS 1929b 020

Box 1929B, Folder 5 In battle with Assiniboines
1 Drawings (visual works)
[Image\(s\): Sitting Bull drawing of him in battle with Assiniboines](#)
Notes: NAA INV 08591700
NAA MS 1929b 021

Box 1929B, Folder 5 In battle with Assiniboines
1 Drawings (visual works)
[Image\(s\): Sitting Bull drawing of him in battle with Assiniboines](#)
Notes: NAA INV 08591800
NAA MS 1929b 022

Box 1929B, Folder 6 [Sitting Bull's interpretation of the drawings and transmittal correspondence](#)
Notes: Contains two handwritten letters from Wallace Tear to John C. Smith, transmitting the ledger book (1882 August 10) and Sitting Bull's interpretation of the drawings (1882 August 16). There is also a

typescript copy of the letter from the donor, Robert Smith, to the Bureau of American Ethnology (1923 June 20).

Box 1929B, Item 1

[Ledger book with newspaper clippings](#)

1 Volume

Notes:

The ledger book from which the 22 drawings by Sitting Bull were removed. The book contains newspaper clippings about Sitting Bull, circa 1890-1900, and is inscribed inside the front cover: "For Gen. J. C. Smith, No. 250 West Van Buren St. Chicago Ill." and "Fort Randall, DT, April 14, 1882." The clippings were most likely added by General Smith.