SMITHSONIAN MISCELLANEOUS COLLECTIONS

VOLUME 97, NUMBER 5

THREE PICTOGRAPHIC AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF SITTING BULL

(WITH 46 PLATES)

BY
M. W. STIRLING
Chief, Bureau of American Ethnology



(Publication 3482)

CITY OF WASHINGTON
PUBLISHED BY THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
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Photograph by Barry

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INTRODUCTION

The name of Sitting Bull will probably always remain as the best known of any American Indian. Whether or not this preeminent place is deserved, it is a fact that more has been printed about him than any other Indian and his name has most intrigued the popular imagination. Part of this notoricty resulted from the fact that he was a prominent and influential Indian during a crucial period in the history of his tribe and partly from the fact that during the latter years of his life he was exploited, both in this country and abroad, in a manner calculated to bring his achievements in a highly colored manner before the general public.¹

It is not the purpose of this introduction to outline the career of Sitting Bull. This has been adequately done by a number of biographers, and the interested reader is referred to the attached selected bibliography.

There is no question concerning the fact that Sitting Bull was a great man, in spite of the fact that many of his contemporaries attempted to belittle his character. It is true, however, that the prominence he later achieved in the popular mind was partly due to circumstances which gave unusual publicity to his career.

In view of his status with the government, Sitting Bull was always reluctant to speak with white men regarding his personal adventures. However, in keeping with the custom of his people, he was proud of his war exploits and kept a careful record of them.

^{&#}x27;In an unpublished manuscript on Sioux names by the famous scout and interpreter, E. H. Allison, the author says of the Indian name of Sitting Bull, Tatanka Yotanka; "Sitting Bull's totem was a bull standing in a defiant attitude, which clearly expressed the meaning of his name, 'The Bull in Possession,' 'The Conquering Bull,' 'The Bull of Occupation,' 'The Sitting Bull.'"



I. THE KIMBALL PICTOGRAPHIC RECORD

When Sitting Bull recounted his honors at the dance following the Sioux victory over the Crow in 1870, Frank Grouard, who was present, states that at this time Sitting Bull was entitled to 63 coups.² About this same time Sitting Bull made his pictographic record after the usual manner of the Plains Indians, representing the feats which entitled him to special credit among the Indians. This set of drawings he gave to his adopted brother, Jumping Bull, who placed with them a pictographic record of his own. While these drawings were in the possession of Jumping Bull, Four Horns copied 55 of them, including 40 from the record of Sitting Bull and the remainder from that of Jumping Bull. In some manner, not yet explained, these copies fell into the hands of another Indian who brought them to Fort Buford, where they eventually came into the possession of Assistant Surgeon James Kimball in August 1870. The fate of the original drawings from which this set was made is not known, although Sitting Bull stated that they were still in the possession of Jumping Bull as late as 1881. According to Col. H. M. Morrow, his father, also Col. H. M. Morrow, who was with Dr. Kimball, procured an identical set at the same time. These copies were both drawn on roster sheets of the Thirty-first United States Infantry. The copy retained by the Morrow family was destroyed in San Francisco in the great fire of 1906. The copy obtained by Dr. Kimball was deposited by him, together with explanations of the pictures obtained at the time from other Indians, with the Medical Director's Office, Department of Dakota, on March 14, 1871. The same year they were transferred to the Army Medical Museum in Washington, D. C. On May 15, 1915, Dr. D. S. Lamb of the Army Medical Museum transferred them to the archives of the Bureau of American Ethnology, where they are at the present time.

From time to time this pictographic record has attracted considerable attention, but it has been reproduced only in part, and the supporting documents concerning it have never before been published.

Although the name of Sitting Bull had already become well known to the whites, he did not become a figure of outstanding national interest until after the annihilation of General Custer and the Seventh Cavalry, June 25, 1876, in which battle Sitting Bull participated.

² De Barthe, 1894, p. 105.

As news concerning the details of the Custer defeat slowly filtered in from the northern plains, newspaper men realized that they had the biggest news story since the Civil War. The fact that the colorful Custer, who had become something of a national idol, was the central figure in the tragic affair, made the story ideal from the standpoint of the journalists. In search of material which could be tied in with the Custer fight, a Washington correspondent learned of the existence of the copy of Sitting Bull's autobiography, then in the Army Medical Museum. Sitting Bull was known to have participated in the battle. Here then was the perfect nucleus for a follow-up story. On July 6, 1876, the New York Herald published a highly colored account of the pictographic record, neglecting to note that the autobiography was not the original handiwork of Sitting Bull. The record was cited as proof of Sitting Bull's cruelty, lust for battle and vainglorious boastfulness. This story was a huge journalistic success. It was copied and revamped by newspapers and magazines throughout the United States. Sitting Bull, who heretofore in the public mind had been but one of a group of hostile chiefs resisting the westward advance of the whites, now became Public Enemy Number I and a character of outstanding interest.

Apparently, an introduction written by Dr. Kimball formerly accompanied the explanatory index and the Williamson letter of verification which are now with the pictographic record.

The news release from Washington of July 6, 1876, as published by the New York Herald says:

Among the many ghastly souvenirs preserved at the Army Medical Museum of this city is an autobiography of Sitting Bull, gotten up in the highest style of the art of savage picture history, and telling, in fifty-five drawings or sketches, the story of his life down to 1870. Each picture is rudely outlined in ink, the men, horses and other objects being such as children would make. Many of them are partly filled in with red and blue colors as if Sitting Bull had at some time got possession of one of the red and blue pencils so well known in newspaper offices, and with it elaborated his pictorial efforts. Blood or a wound is indicated by a red blotch with streamers falling down from it. The blue is used generally in indicating the white man's pantaloons. Each picture is made on a sheet of paper eight by ten inches, and is pasted into a book of blank leaves, such as are used for a scrap book. By holding the sheets up to the light it is seen that they are the muster-roll blanks of the 31st United States Infantry, of which Col. de Trobriand was the commandant. The papers probably fell into Sitting Bull's hands at the evacuation of a camp, or, as is more likely, were stolen by him during a visit to some of our outposts. Sitting Bull is not at all modest in committing to posterity the story of his great deeds. Whether it be the scalping of a soldier in battle or the sly theft of a mule, he brags equally of his prowess in his curious autobiography. This literary work, which is now likely to be famous, fell into the hands of Assistant Surgeon

James C. Kimball, of the army, in the month of August, 1870, while he was stationed at Fort Buford, Dakota Territory. He had the pictures translated, and sent them, with the translation and an index, to the Curator of the Army Medical Museum, Washington, Surgeon George A. Otis, United States Army, who has filed them in book shape, among the archives of the Museum. The introduction, written by Dr. Kimball goes on to say that the autobiography contains a description of the principal adventures in the life of Sitting Bull, who is an Unk-pa-pa chief. It was sketched by himself in the picture language, in common use with the Indians. Since the establishment of Fort Buford, in 1866, Sitting Bull, at the head of from sixty to seventy warriors, had been the terror of mail-carriers, wood-choppers and small parties in the vicinity of the post and from 100 to 200 miles from it either way, up and down the Missouri River. During the time from 1860 to 1870, when the autobiography was written, this band had several times captured and destroyed the mail and had stolen and run off over 200 head of cattle and killed near a score of white men in the immediate vicinity of the fort. The Unk-pa-pas are a tribe of the great Sioux Nation, living in the Yellowstone and Powder River countries.

The book was brought into Fort Buford by a Yanktonnais Sioux, and offered for sale and purchased for \$1.50 worth of provisions. The Indian gave conflicting statements regarding the manner in which he came into possession of the book, exciting suspicion that he had stolen it from Sitting Bull, who in his turn, undoubtedly stole the book in blank from the whites.

In an article over the name of Porte Crayon published in the supplement to Harper's Weekly of July 29, 1876, the editor says:

About the year 1870 a collection of MS. drawings, put up in book form, bearing the autograph of Sitting Bull and exhibiting a record of his exploits and adventures, was brought into Fort Buford by a Yanktonnais Sioux and sold for a dollar and fifty cents worth of provisions. When cross-questioned regarding the ownership of the book, the Indian shuffled and prevaricated so as to confirm the belief that he had stolen it from Sitting Bull himself. The authenticity of the work, with its general historical accuracy, is confirmed by Assistant Surgeon James C. Kimball, U.S.A., who, with the aid of interpreters. Indians, and others versed in the picture-language of the Northwestern tribes, wrote a detailed explanation of the scenes represented, accompanied by a brief sketch of the warrior-artist's life. The book was then forwarded to the Superintendent of the Army Medical Museum at Washington, who placed it in the hands of the present editor.

The series consists of fifty-five designs, drawn on the blank side of printed rosters of the Thirty-first United States Infantry, of uniform size (about eight by ten inches), clearly outlined with a pen and a brown ink resembling sepia. There is no attempt at shading, but the outlines are filled in with flat tints, very crudely laid on, with red and blue chalk, yellow ochre, green, and the same brown ink or pigment used in the outlines. The coloring, which is quite appropriate in the dress and trappings of the human figures, is rather florid in the animals. Thus while there seems to be great care in showing the characteristic spots and markings of the horses and mules, the sorrels are represented with bright yellow, the grays with blue, the bays red, and the browns and blacks with the aforesaid brown ink.

This coloring, however, serves to impart life and meaning to the designs, to relieve the groupings from confusion, and is sometimes so arranged as to produce quite an artistic effect of chiaro-oscuro. It may be further noted that there is no attempt at foreshortening, the objects and figures being all shown in flat profile, and without exception, all looking and moving in the same direction, that is, from right to left.

Of all the objects presented by the artist, the figure of the buffalo bull is elaborated with the most intelligent and loving minuteness. The horses and mules are drawn with a free and well-assured hand, with a tendency to mannerism, relieved somewhat by distinctive character in color, markings, and details. He is least happy in his delineations of the human figure, draperies, and accountements, although in some scenes his attitudes are spirited and his costumes sufficiently marked to enable us to identify the sex and country of those who have had the honor to sit for their portraits to this distinguished limner.

The information in the two foregoing newspaper accounts concerning the manner in which the pictographic record was obtained at Fort Buford presumably was obtained from Dr. Kimball's now missing introduction. The article published by Harper's Weekly reproduces 11 of the drawings with a rather detailed description of the set based partly on the Kimball index and partly upon speculation by the editor.

As already indicated, the pictures are drawn on the reverse side of loose-leaf roster pages of the Thirty-first United States Infantry. The numbers were subsequently placed on them arbitrarily without regard to the actual chronology of the events described.³

In 1881 the pictures, together with the Kimball index, were forwarded through Col. George S. Andrews to Rev. John P. Williamson, missionary with the Sioux, who showed them to Sitting Bull for purposes of verification. The results obtained from this interview are explained in the following letter:

FORT RANDALL, DAKOTA TER. Dec. 12, 1881.

Col. Geo. L. Andrews, 25 U. S. Infantry, Commanding Post,

SIR:

I have the honor to state that in connection with Capt. G. Lawson, I interviewed Sitting Bull in regard to the supposed "Hyeroglyphic Autobiography" of himself, contained in pictured sketches, numbered 1 to 55, obtained by Jas. C. Kimball, Ass't. Surgeon, U.S.A., in the year 1870.

³ Vestal, in describing them, has placed them in what he considers to be the order in which the different feats took place.

Sitting Bull immediately recognized the pictures as scenes from his early life, with the exception of Nos. 39 to 51, and 53 and 54, which he said were not his, but were adventures of his brother Jumping Bull.

As to the scenes from his own life, he says these are all true scenes, and he drew a similar set many years ago and gave them to his brother Jumping Bull. He saw his brother last summer and understood from him that he still had them. He thinks therefore that this set must be a copy of the one he made, and has been drawn off by some Indian, he does not know by whom. He could tell perhaps by seeing his brother who is at Standing Rock.

Sitting Bull verified in the main the Index accompanying the pictures.

No. I he says was his first feat, accomplished when he was fourteen years of age.

No. 10 he says was a Ree, who drops his gun and bow from fear. He was struck (for "coup") but not killed (no blood is shown). The scalp at the horses bridle, here and elsewhere, not being intended to represent the scalp of the enemy drawn.

No. 55 he says is not completed—should have his "name" (as he calls the sitting buffalo).

As to the particular history of each event recorded, we found Sitting Bull rather reserved, especially in regard to Scenes Nos. 11 to 26, and we could see that any narration he gave of the several events was colored by the circumstances of his present situation. And I would suggest that if a more full account of his war deeds is desired, a better time to secure it would be at some future date when his status is definitely determined.

Yours Respectfully,

(signed) John P. Williamson, *Missionary*.

In reproducing the drawings, the explanation of each is given exactly as written in the Kimball index in 1870. It should be borne in mind that these interpretations were furnished by Indians familiar with the career of Sitting Bull but not by the Sioux warrior himself.

For purposes of comparison these explanations are supplemented by the interpretations published by Vestal.*

No. 54 is missing from the set. This picture was one of the Jumping Bull series and represented an episode in the famous battle of 1870 between the Sioux and the Crow. The Kimball description says "Sitting Bull at the head of his band charges into a camp of Crows and kills thirty of them. (This happened in the winter of 1869-70.)"

^{&#}x27;Vestal says, "For Sitting Bull's interpretations of these drawings, given in 1885, I am indebted to Mr. Seth C. Jones, Secretary, Municipal Art Commission, Rochester, N. Y."

"Sitting Bull, a young man without reputation and therefore wearing no feather, engages in his first battle and charges his enemy, a Crow Indian who is in the act of drawing his bow, rides him down and strikes him with a 'coup' stick. Sitting Bull's autograph—a buffalo bull sitting on his haunches—is inscribed over him. His shield suspended in front has on it the figure of an eagle which he considers his 'medicine'—in the Indian sense of the term." ⁶— KIMBALL.

"1846. On Red Water. The boy Sitting Bull, as yet an unfledged warrior, is shown on horseback, charging an enemy whom he strikes with a *coup* stick. On his blue shield a black bird is painted, and four black-tipped eagle feathers flutter from the edges of the shield."—Vestal.

No. 2

"Sitting Bull wearing a war bonnet is leader of a war party who takes a party of Crows consisting of three women and a man, so completely by surprise that the man has not time to draw his arrows from the quiver. Sitting Bull kills one woman with his lance and captures another, the man meanwhile endeavoring to drag him from his horse, from which it is supposed he is forced to desist by others of the war-party. The fate only of Sitting Bull and his victims is given in this history."—KIMBALL.

"1858. Rainy Butte. This picture commemorates the capture of three Crow women, at the time when Sitting Bull's father was killed. Sitting Bull carries the lance made for him by his parents, and wears a bonnet with horns and a long trail of eagle feathers. A Crow warrior is represented as trying to arrest his charge."—Vestal.

⁶ See Williamson letter, p. 7. For detailed circumstances of this exploit, see Vestal, 1932, p. 13.









"Sitting Bull pursuing his enemy, a Crow Indian whom he strikes with his lance."—KIMBALL.

"1856. On Yellowstone River. Sitting Bull counts *coup* with his lance on a mounted Crow warrior who carries a shield and a gun. As required by the obligations belonging to his shield, Sitting Bull wears his hair in a knot like a horn on his forehead."—VESTAL.

No. 4

"Lances a Crow woman."—KIMBALL.

"1860. Sitting Bull counts *coup* on a Crow woman riding a mule. She turns to fend off his lance as he strikes at her. This happened when the Sioux encountered Crow hunters among the buffalo herds and Makes-the-Enemy killed two Crow women."—Vestal.

"Lances a Crow Indian."—KIMBALL.

"1853(?). Sitting Bull unhorses a Crow warrior with his lance. The story is well known, but no eye-witnesses now live, and the date and place are uncertain."—Vestal.

No. 6

"Sitting Bull twice wounded, and unhorsed. His enemy, a Crow, at length killed by a shot in the abdomen and his scalp taken and hung on Sitting Bull's bridle." ^{5a}—Kimball.

^{5a} Regarding the mention of scalps in this and succeeding pictures, see Williamson letter, p. 7.

[&]quot;1856. On Porcupine Creek. Sitting Bull, shown wearing his Strong Heart bonnet and sash, crouches behind his shield and shoots a Crow chief through the belly, at the same time being wounded in the foot. Flame and smoke pour from the guns, and the wounds bleed freely. Sitting Bull's black war horse awaits its master in the background."—Vestal.









"In an engagement with the Crows, Sitting Bull mortally wounds one of the enemy and dropping his lance rides up and strikes him with his whip. The lines and dashes in the picture represent the arrows and bullets that were flying in the air during the combat."—KINBALL.

"1861. Sitting Bull, amid a hail of enemy bullets, wounds a Crow warrior with his lance, then drops it and strikes him over the head with the heavy notched wooden handle of his quirt, which is decorated with a dangling kit-fox skin—the insignia of his Warrior Society. The Crow carries a quiver, and bleeds freely."—VESTAL.

No. 8

"Counts 'coup' on a Gros Ventre de Prairie, by striking him with his lance. Gros Ventre distinguished from Crow by manner of wearing the hair."—KIMBALL.

"1857. On the Missouri River. Winter. Sitting Bull, armed with a gun and wearing his Strong Heart and white blanket coat, strikes with his lance the Hohe lad whom he is to save and to adopt as his brother, named Jumping Bull, or Little Assiniboin."—Vestal.

"Lances a Crow Indian."-KIMBALL.

"1858. Near Rainy Butte. Sitting Bull lances and kills a Crow warrior, the slayer of his father in that very fight." ** — Vestal.

No. 10

"A Crow Indian attempts to seize Sitting Bull's horse by the bridle. Sitting Bull knocks him down with a 'coup' stick, takes his scalp and hangs it to his bridle." "—KIMBALL.

⁵⁶ For details see Vestal, p. 44.

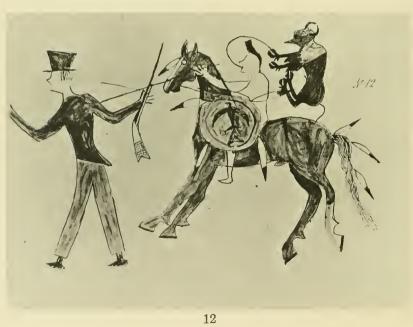
⁶ Sitting Bull corrected this interpretation saying that his opponent is a Ree who drops his gun and bow from fear. The Ree was struck for coup but not killed (no blood is shown). See p. 7.

[&]quot;1859. Near Fort Berthold. A Ree enemy grabs the bridle of Sitting Bull's horse. Sitting Bull kills him, and takes his gun and bow."—Vestal.









"Sitting Bull with his brother mounted behind him kill a white man—a soldier." —KIMBALL.

"1868. In a skirmish with white men Sitting Bull rescues his unhorsed companion Jumping Bull, takes him up behind, and charges a white man armed with a rifle. Jumping Bull, being armed with a long lance, is able to strike the white man first. Sitting Bull has to be content with the second *coup*."—Vestal.

No. 12

"Counts 'coup' on a white man by striking him with a 'coup' stick."

—Kimball.

"1868. Sitting Bull strikes a white man. This happened on the same warpath as the deed recorded in Fig. 11. Circling Hawk, now living, was leader of this war party."—Vestal.

⁷ When Williamson showed these pictures to Sitting Bull for verification, he found him unwilling to go into detail concerning his war exploits involving white opponents.

"In a warm engagement with the whites, as shown by the bullets flying about, Sitting Bull shoots an arrow through the body of a soldier who turns and fires wounding Sitting Bull in the hip."—KIMBALL.

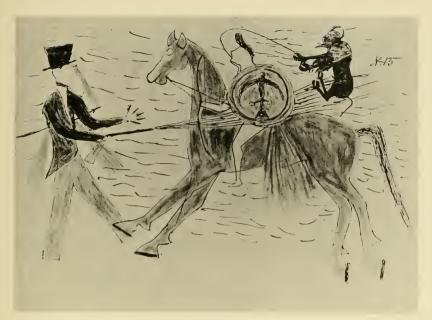
"1864. Near White Butte, on the Little Missouri River. Under heavy fire, Sitting Bull charges a white soldier. Though transfixed by an arrow from behind, and bleeding copiously from mouth and wounds, the brave soldier turns and shoots Sitting Bull through the buttocks, causing great loss of blood." *—Vestal.

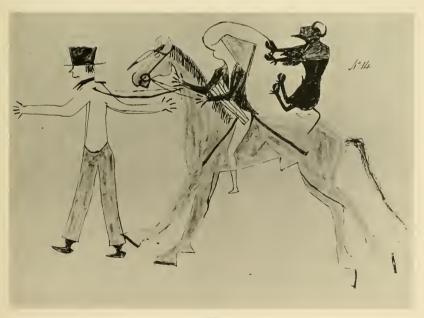
No. 14

"Sitting Bull counts 'comp' on a white man by striking him with his bow. Sitting Bull wears a jacket and bandanna handkerchief taken from some of his victims."—Kimball.

"1867-68 (winter). On the Montana Trail. Sitting Bull counts coup on a white man. In this affair Sitting Bull counted nine coups. This picture is followed by eight others showing the other coups struck. But as the drawings differ only in the details of the dress and persons of the white men, they have not been given here. Several of the white men were represented as having hair on their bodies—a thing considered loathsome by the Sioux."—Vestal.

⁸ This episode is described in detail by Vestal. See Vestal, 1932, p. 64.









"Sitting Bull counting 'coup' on a white man."—KIMBALL.

No. 16

"Sitting Bull counting 'coup' on a white man."—KIMBALL.

"Sitting Bull counting 'coup' on a white man."—KIMBALL.

No. 18

"Sitting Bull counting 'coup' on a white man."—KIMBALL.









"Sitting Bull counting 'coup' on a white man."—KIMBALL.

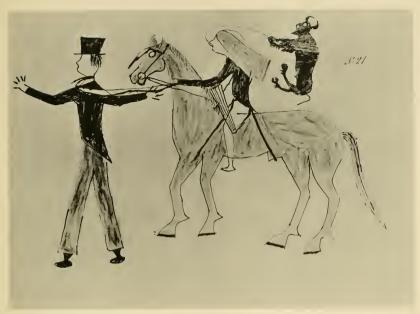
No. 20

"Sitting Bull counting 'coup' on a white man."—KIMBALL.

"Sitting Bull counting 'coup' on a white man."—KIMBALL.

No. 22

"Sitting Bull counting 'coup' on a white man."—KIMBALL.









"Sitting Bull shoots a frontiersman wearing a buckskin shirt, takes his scalp which he hangs on his own bridle and captures his horse. Sitting Bull wears a blanket."—KIMBALL.

"1863. Near Fort Totten, in the Devil's Lake country. Sitting Bull, wearing a red blanket, chases a mounted white man in a fringed buckskin coat, and shoots him between the shoulders. This was Sitting Bull's first white victim."—VESTAL.

No. 24

"Sitting Bull strikes a white soldier with his 'coup' stick, takes his scalp and his mule. Wears a war shirt."—KIMBALL.

"1863, June. The skirmish with General H. H. Sibley's wagontrain on the Missouri River, near the mouth of Apple Creek. Sitting Bull, facing a heavy fire, as shown by flying bullets, charges a muleskinner armed with a blacksnake whip, counts *coup* on him, and makes off with a saddled mule."—Vestal.

"Counts 'coup' on a soldier, mounted with overcoat on, gun slung across his back, by riding up and striking with his riding whip."—KIMBALL.

"1867. On the Montana Trail. Sitting Bull overtakes a white man wearing an overcoat and armed with a rifle. Sitting Bull carries only a quirt, with which he strikes the fugitive. On his head Sitting Bull wears a bandanna taken from some enemy."—Vestal.

No. 26

"Kills a white man and takes his scalp."—KIMBALL.

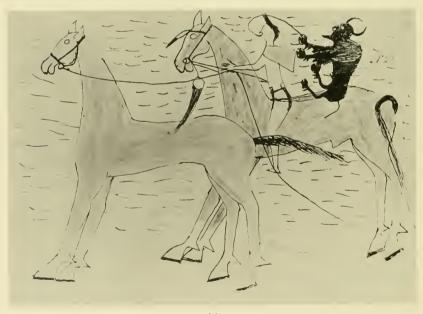
"1867. On the Niobrara River near the Missouri. Sitting Bull shoots a white man armed with a sawed-off shotgun. Sitting Bull carries a revolver, and is riding a rawhide saddle, made by his uncle."

—Vestal.









"Captures a mule and a scalp."—KIMBALL.

"1865. North of the Black Hills. In a skirmish with the troops under Colonel N. Cole, of the Powder River Expedition, Sitting Bull runs off a slow pack-mule."—VESTAL.

No. 28

"In a warm engagement, captures a horse and a scalp."—KIMBALL.

"1865. On the Montana Trail. Under heavy fire from the soldiers, Sitting Bull captures a buckskin mare. He afterward gave her to his sister."—Vestal.

"Steals a mule."—KIMBALL.

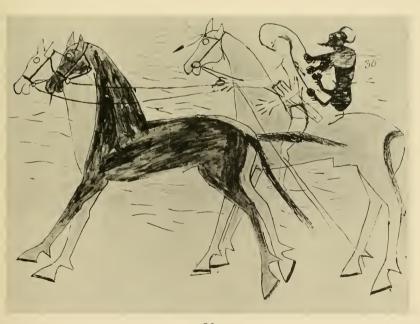
"November 6, 1867. Fort Buford. In an attack on the woodcutters from the post, one soldier was killed, one wounded. Sitting Bull captures a fine brown Army mule with a black spot on the withers, off side. He gave the mule to his sister."—Vestal.

No. 30

"Captures two horses in action."—KIMBALL.

"1864. Under fire, Sitting Bull takes from the soldiers a chestnut and a buckskin horse. The buckskin he trained to run buffalo, and then gave it to his sister. These horses were captured in the Badlands from General Sully's troops."—Vestal.











"Steals a horse."—KIMBALL.

"1865. On the Montana Trail. Sitting Bull steals a fast buckskin war horse. He gave it to his adopted brother, Jumping Bull."—Vestal.

No. 32

"Steals and runs off a drove of horses from the Crows."—KIMBALL.

"1863-64 (winter). Sitting Bull brings home nine Crow ponies: five bays, two blacks, one buckskin mule, and a little white mare. The mare he presented to his favorite sister, Pretty Plume."—VESTAL.

"In an engagement captures a government horse, and mule, and a scalp."—Kimball.

"1860. Amid a shower of bullets, which fill the air, Sitting Bull, riding his famous war horse Blackie, runs off two animals from a Crow camp. One of them is a branded Army mule, picked up or stolen by the Crows. These animals Sitting Bull gave for Brown Eyes, the girl who became his fourth wife."—Vestal.

No. 34.

"1866. On the Montana Trail. Sitting Bull takes a horse with a split ear from white men."—Vestal.

[&]quot;Steals a horse."—KIMBALL.









"Captures three horses and a scalp."—KIMBALL.

"1866. Wearing his Strong Heart bonnet, and riding Blackie, Sitting Bull captures three Crow ponies; one bay, one black, one mouse-colored."—Vestal.

No. 36

"Steals a drove of horses from the Crows."—KIMBALL.

"1862. Sitting Bull runs off a bunch of Crow ponies. Sitting Bull was such a noted horse-stealer that the old men say nobody can remember all his raids. Chief Charging Thunder stated that to his own knowledge Sitting Bull took horses from the Crows twenty times, sometimes as many as thirty head at a time."—Vestal.

"Steals a government horse."—KIMBALL.

"1865. Wearing beaded leggins and a fur cap with earflaps, Sitting Bull runs off a horse belonging to the Powder River Expedition."—Vestal.

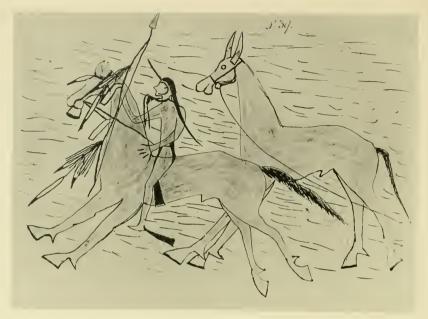
No. 38

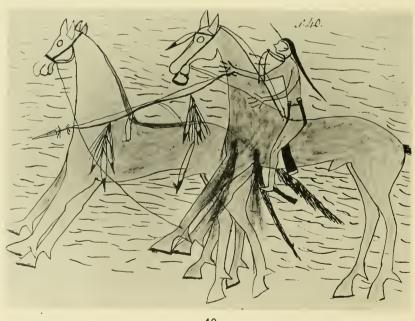
"Steals a drove of horses from the Crows."—Kimball.

"1859-60. Wearing his Strong Heart bonnet, Sitting Bull runs off seven Crow ponies: two white, two black, one bay, one buckskin, and one mouse-colored."—Vestal.









"In an engagement captures a mule. Sitting Bull first appears here as Chief of the Band of Strong Hearts, to which dignity his prowess has raised him. The insignia of his rank—a bow having on one end a lance head—he carries in his hand." "—KIMBALL.

No. 40

"Sitting Bull, Chief of the Band of Strong Hearts, captures two horses in an engagement in which his horse is wounded in the shoulder." ¹⁰—KIMBALL.

^o This drawing actually depicts a feat of Jumping Bull the adopted son of Sitting Bull. See Williamson letter, p. 7.

¹⁰ This drawing actually represents an exploit of Jumping Bull. It is erroneously attributed to Sitting Bull by Kimball. (See p. 7.)

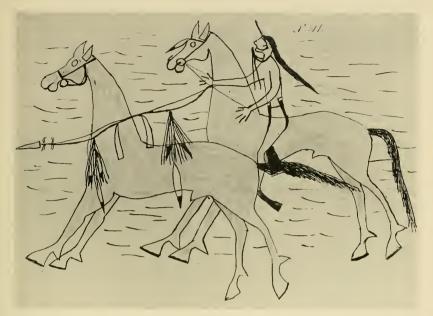
"Captures a horse in a fight." "—KIMBALL.

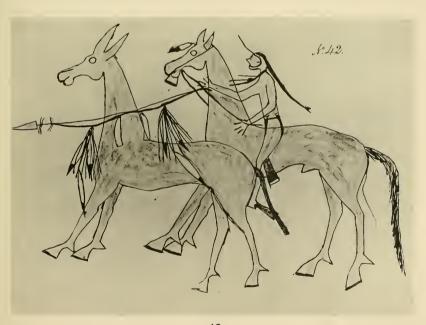
¹¹ This drawing actually represents an exploit of Jumping Bull. It is erroneously attributed to Sitting Bull by Kimball. (See p. 7.)

No. 42

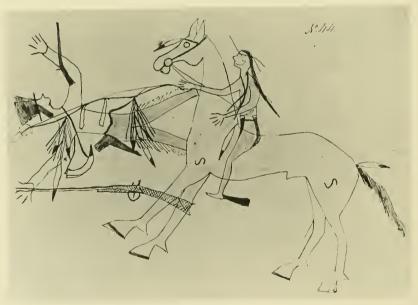
"Steals a mule." 12—Kimball.

¹² This drawing actually represents an exploit of Junping Bull. It is erroneously attributed to Sitting Bull by Kimball. (See p. 7.)









"Captures two horses in a fight in which his horse is wounded in the leg." ¹³—KIMBALL.

No. 44

"Mounted on a government horse, captures a white man." "— KIMBALL.

¹⁸ This drawing actually represents an exploit of Jumping Bull. It is erroneously attributed to Sitting Bull by Kimball. (See p. 7.)

¹⁴ This drawing actually represents an exploit of Jumping Bull. It is erroneously attributed to Sitting Bull by Kimball. (See p. 7.)

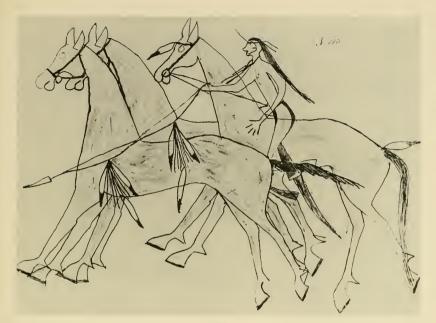
"Steals two horses." 15—KIMBALL.

No. 46

"Captures four mules in a fight in which his horse is wounded in the hip." ¹⁶—KIMBALL.

¹⁵ This drawing actually represents an exploit of Jumping Bull. It is erroneously attributed to Sitting Bull by Kimball. (See p. 7.)

¹⁰ This drawing actually represents an exploit of Jumping Bull. It is erroneously attributed to Sitting Bull by Kimball. (See p. 7.)









"Counts 'coup' on white man." 17—KIMBALL.

¹⁷ This drawing actually represents an exploit of Jumping Bull. It is erroneously attributed to Sitting Bull by Kimball. (See p. 7.)

No. 48

[&]quot;Counts 'coup' on white man." 18—KIMBALL.

¹⁸ This drawing actually represents an exploit of Jumping Bull. It is erroneously attributed to Sitting Bull by Kimball. (See p. 7.)

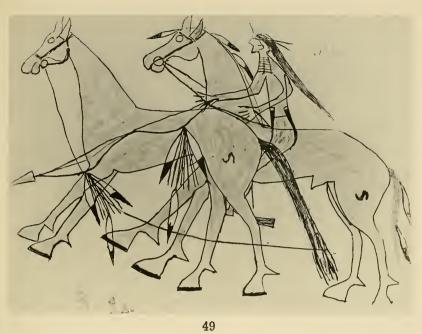
"Steals a government horse." 19—KIMBALL.

No. 50

"Fastens his horse to his lance driven into the earth and in a hand to hand fight kills a white man with his own gun. The black marks show the ground fought and trampled over." 20—KIMBALL.

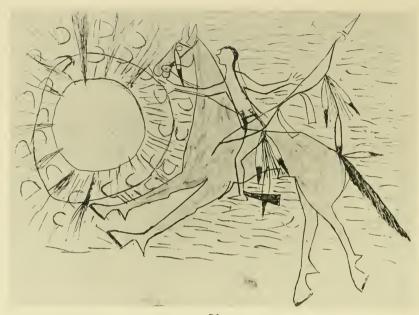
¹⁰ This drawing actually represents an exploit of Jumping Bull. It is erroneously attributed to Sitting Bull by, Kimball. (See p. 7.)

²⁰ This drawing actually represents an exploit of Jumping Bull. It is erroneously attributed to Sitting Bull by Kimball. (See p. 7.)











"A fort into which his enemies the Crows, have retreated and from which they maintain a hot fire through which Sitting Bull charges the fort," ²¹—KIMBALL.

No. 52

"In a fight with the Crows, Sitting Bull kills and scalps one Indian, and counts 'coup' on another who fired at him barely missing him." 22

—Kimball.

²¹ This drawing actually represents an exploit of Jumping Bull. It is erroneously attributed to Sitting Bull by Kimball. (See p. 7.)

This apparently represents the feat of Jumping Bull performed at Spoon Horn Butte, where he drew the fire of the Crows in order to empty their guns before the Sioux charged. This exploit is described in Vestal, 1932, p. 116.

²² For details concerning this exploit see Vestal, 1932, chap. 16.

[&]quot;1869. Near the Big Dry. An incident of the battle in which the thirty Crows were killed. Sitting Bull, wearing a horned bonnet and beaded leggins, charges the rocky barrier (indicated by the circle), and counts *coup* upon a Crow, who fires in his face, but misses. The air is full of flying lead."—Vestal.

"Steals a drove of mules." 23—KIMBALL.

No. 55

"Kills one Crow and counts 'coup' on two others, who run from him disgracefully." ²⁴—Kimball.

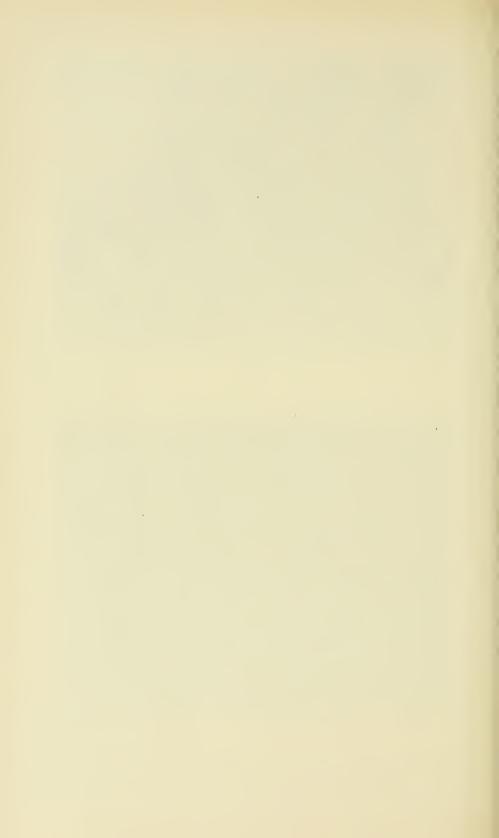
²⁸ This drawing actually represents an exploit of Jumping Bull. It is erroneously attributed to Sitting Bull by Kimball. (See p. 7.)

²⁴ Sitting Bull stated to Williamson that this picture is incomplete. It should carry his "name" glyph. (See p. 7.)

[&]quot;This, the last of the series, is incomplete, and lacks the picture of the seated buffalo, which should identify Sitting Bull. However, the shield is enough to serve that purpose. Sitting Bull himself explained that this unfinished sketch represented a fight with the Crows in which he killed one and counted *coup* on two others, who ran from him disgracefully. The date and place of this fight are unknown."—Vestal.







II. THE SMITH PICTOGRAPHIC RECORD

In June 1923, through the generosity of Mr. Robert A. Smith, the Bureau of American Ethnology archives were enriched by another Sitting Bull document of even greater interest. This consists of a later Sitting Bull pictographic autobiography drawn by the great Sioux warrior himself. Although it contains drawings of only 22 exploits, it is well documented, and the explanations of the drawings were given by Sitting Bull at the time the pictures were made.

The drawings were made with a pencil on the pages of an army ledger book, and colored by means of water-color paint. The human figures are rather crudely drawn in the usual Plains Indian style, but Sitting Bull shows his individuality even in the field of art, by the manner in which the horses are depicted. Departing from the general Plains Indian style of representing horses in a slender and much conventionalized fashion, he draws his horses realistically and in a well rounded manner. The various horses shown are so conscientiously delineated that some of them can be recognized from descriptions of Sitting Bull's favorite mounts given by Vestal and others.²⁵

In the Four Horns copy of Sitting Bull's autobiography of 1870, the warrior is always identified by his name glyph in the form of a seated buffalo. At the time the present picture record was made, Sitting Bull had learned to write his name, and his signature accompanies each drawing in the place of the buffalo.

The following letter from Mr. Smith accompanied the book of pictures and the documents concerning them.

²⁵ Bob Davis, the well known newspaper writer, informed the author that in an interview in 1931, he learned that Rudolph Cronau was sent to America by the *Gartenlaube*, a weekly periodical published in Leipzig, to cover the Indian wars as illustrator. In 1881 the artist made the acquaintance of Sitting Bull shortly after his surrender at Fort Buford. Sitting Bull was much interested in watching Cronau make his sketches and wishing to gain the friendship of the Sioux leader, Cronau spent some time in teaching him to draw. This very probably accounts for the sophisticated and un-Indian appearance of the horses drawn by Sitting Bull.

ROBERT A. SMITH 430 S. Garden Street South Bellingham, Wash.

June 20, 1923.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION Washington, D. C.

GENTLEMEN:

I am sending with this a book of paintings by Sitting Bull, with interpretation of same, letters from Wallace Tear, Lieut. 25th Infantry U.S.A. to my father, General John C. Smith, which explain themselves. Lieut. Tear was a soldier in the 96th Regt. Infantry—Illinois U.S.V. 1860-65.

My father was Captain, Major, Lieutenant Colonel, Brevet-Colonel 96th Regt., and Brevet Brig. General. At the close of the war he was able to get a commission in the Regular Army for Tear and did him some favors afterwards, hence this History of Bull.

All the people mentioned are gone and when I pass on there will be none that will be interested, so I would like to have this book where perhaps it might interest someone—sometime.

I am, Gentlemen,

Respectfully,
ROBERT A. SMITH
430 South Gardner Street
South Bellingham

Washington

Two letters of explanation from Lieutenant Tear addressed to Gen. John C. Smith were with the pictographic record.

FORT RANDALL, D. T. August 10, 1882

DEAR GENERAL:

Yours of 31th ult., with photographs of yourself and wife recd. Many thanks. Mrs. Smith looks younger than she did 20 years ago—fact—you don't look very old yourself. I may be a little prejudiced in this matter as I am "passing off" as a young man yet.

I have Sitting Bull's description of the paintings, taken down when the pictures were made. Am copying them for you, and will send them next mail. Intended to send them with the book, but I had to send the book to keep it from being stolen. I came near losing it. Some tourists wished to look at it and then borrowed it for a while to show to some friends. I only got it back "by a scratch." They had hidden it with the intention of carrying it off. As soon as I got my hands on it, I put it into the mail.

Bull is very diffident about giving any incidents of his fights with the whites. I have tried to have him give me a detailed description of the Custer fight but he seems rather timid. Once in speaking of the affair he said: "I did not hunt Custer. I thought I had a right to protect my own women and children. If he (Custer) had taken our village he would have killed our women and children. It was a fair fight."

I will try and get him to make a picture of some portion of the fight.

I will try and think of some trinket that would please him as a gift from you—something that will cost but little—I can't think of anything at present,

Am quite well. Have been out in the field a good deal this summer and am quite busy. I have the luck to be alone with the Co. most of the time.

Love to all. Of course you will be elected. If you need my vote I will come home on election day.

Yours truly, W. TEAR (signed)

FORT RANDALL, D. T. August 16, 1882

DEAR GENERAL:

I send you inclosed Sitting Bull's interpretation of his paintings recently sent you.

I furnished the book which contains the paintings and from time to time saw him at work on them. These notes were taken down by me, after the paintings were completed, in Sitting Bull's tipi in the same routine as given by himself (thro an interpreter of course) Bull having the picture before him while giving a description of the fight. It was impossible to locate the scenes with any definiteness; "The Land of the Sioux"; "The Land of the Crows" and "a long way from the Missouri" being the usual location given. In talking of his life Bull uses his name instead of the pronoun "I"; that is he speaks in the third person. In these notes you must understand that it is Sitting Bull speaking. Bull made these pictures for me to show his gratitude for blankets and clothing furnished his children last winter before the Government supply of clothing for his band arrived.

I am endeavoring to get him to complete his history up to the present time, and if successful you shall have it.

Bull says he is 43 years old. I think he is nearer 50. These scenes of his life of course comprise his life from the time that he was able to ride a horse and handle a bow. The scars of the wounds he speaks of are visible now.

Regards to your family.

Yours truly, W. TEAR (Signed) Lieut. 25th Infantry

GEN. J. C. SMITH Chicago, Ill. 250 W. Van Buren Street

The list of explanations with the picture record are written in the hand of Lieutenant Tear on nine pages of foolscap paper. These explanations are here placed opposite the pictures described, exactly as written.

No. o

Assimiboine Chief taken prisoner by Sitting Bull in a fight between Sioux and Assimiboines. 100 Sioux—whole tribe of Assimiboines engaged—about 27 years ago, when Sitting Bull was about 16 years old—Land of the Sioux. Kept the chief prisoner for while and then gave him the horse he ("Bull") rode and the bonnet he ("Bull") wore in the fight and then sent him to his people with a good heart.

No. I

Fight with Assimiboines—140 Sioux—43 Assimiboines—23 Assimiboines killed—8 Sioux killed—20 Sioux wounded—"Bull" 18 years old—In land of Sioux. Bull took several prisoners. Didn't kill prisoners. Kept them many days. Gave them ponies and sent them home. Assimiboines were hunting in Land of the Sioux.









No. 2 Scene in same fight.

No. 3

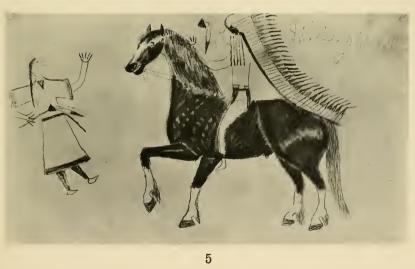
Fight with Assinniboines. "Bull" 24 years old. 50 Sioux—200 Assinniboines. No Sioux killed. 5 Assinniboines killed. "Bull" kills warrior. "Bull" 24 years old.

Assinniboine woman taken prisoner by "Bull" in a fight. "Bull" 16 years old.

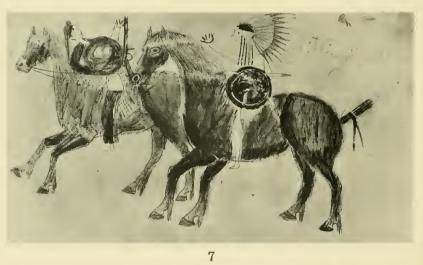
No. 5

Same fight. 5 women captured by "Bull."









Same fight. Woman captured by "Bull." The warrior toutches [sic] woman with his lance and she becomes a prisoner. Warrior never strikes a woman in a fight except to save his own life. These women were kept with the Sioux a short time and then sent back to their own people except 3 who married Sioux warriors and remained; one of them here now. No one killed in this fight. Assimiboines passing thro Land of the Sioux.

No. 7

Fight with the Crows. Crow Indian killed by "Bull." 30 Sioux warriors—200 Crows, men, women and children. 14 Crows killed. No Sioux killed. Crows were travelling with their camps. "Bull" 20 years old. On the Little Missouri river, "Crows always fighting the Sioux—tried to make friends with them but they were always doing something bad."—Bull.

Fight with Assinniboines. Warrior killed by "Bull." 350 Sioux run upon 10 Assinniboines and killed 2. I Sioux killed and 2 wounded. Land of the Sioux, a little above the forks of the Missouri near mouth of Yellow Stone. "Bull" 25 years old.

No. 9

Scene in same fight described in No. 7. "Bull" kills Crow Indian.









Fight with Crows. "Bull" killed 2 men and captured 2 women. "Bull" 25 years old. Crows were stealing ponies. Let women go home with presents for Crow chiefs to try and make friends.

No. 11

Fight with Crows. 100 Sioux—whole tribe of Crows. Bull killed Crow Chief. 3 Crows killed. 1 Sioux warrior and 1 woman killed. Land of the Sioux—a little above Tongue River. Bull 22 years.

Same fight. "Took long time to kill these people. Here is where I got wounded in leg and got off of horse and killed this man. No prisoners in that fight. This is 'Stand and Kill' Crow Chief. Had guns in this fight. The Sioux used to take the Crows prisoners and give them good clothes and feed them up and give them good ponies and then send them back so they could tell a good story of the Sioux to their people." ("Bull's" description of fight.)

No. 13

Fight with Assinniboines. "Bull" takes 2 prisoners. "Bull" 30 years old. 300 Sioux—20 Assinniboines—2 Assinniboines killed—no Sioux killed. On the big fork of the Missouri. "Bull" took one prisoner, "Jumping Bull," home to his (Bull's) tipi (wigwam) gave him his ("Bull's") horse and war bonnet. Jumping Bulls' father was a Chief. Jumping Bull is now at Standing Rock (Fort Yates, D. T.) with my people. They call him my son.









Fight with the Rees. 16 Sioux. 100 Rees. Sioux were fighting and retreating. Sioux turned and chased Rees. This Ree Indian, Chief "Bull Head," fell down dead. "Bull" took him prisoner and he came to life again. This is the only Ree caught in the fight. No Sioux killed. In the land of the Rees. "Bull" sent this prisoner home with presents. Made peace with Rees, and peace with Assinniboines. "Bull" 33 years old.

No. 15

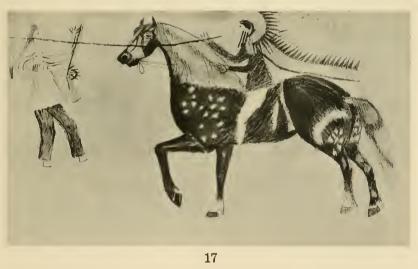
Fight with Gen. Miles' Scouts and Crow Indians. "Bull" kills "Brave Indian," one of Gen. Miles Scouts. About three years ago—the time Gen. Miles was out after the Sioux near the Queens' land (Canada) "Brave Indian" was away ahead of the soldiers and was following up the Sioux too close. "Bull" turned and killed "Brave Indian." One Cheyenne Indian (scout) also killed. Sioux did not fight soldiers—wanted to get away from soldiers. The scouts and Crows killed 5 Sioux before they got to Canada. Gen. Miles' Scouts seemed to be from every Indian nation. The Sioux run away.

Fight with Flat Heads. "Bull" wounded in left arm and side by arrow. "Bull" killed Flat Head. 15 Sioux, young men, went on war path. Flat Heads killed them all. Sioux then went out with 300 warriors. 40 Sioux attacked the camp of the Flat Heads; the main body of Sioux being hid back from the camp; the Flat Heads chased the 40 Sioux back through the main force of Sioux. The Sioux charged and killed 33 Flat Heads. 4 Sioux killed—good many wounded. 7 years ago. Bull 36 years old. Near Muscle Shell river.

No. 17

Crow Indian killed by "Bull." 200 Sioux run upon 7 Crows hunting in Land of the Sioux and killed them all. Crows had guns. Sioux had nothing but bows and lances. Crows were crossing Missouri—(river). A few years ago. ("Bull" gave his age at the time of this fight but my notes are defaced at this point so that I am uncertain as to how old he said he was.—Tear.)









Fight with Crows. 200 Sioux—whole tribe of Crows. "Bull" kills Crow warrior. 5 Crows killed in the fight. No Sioux killed. "Bull" 33 years old. (Chicken Hawk, skinned and skin stuffed, worn as ornament where picture of bird is seen near Bull's head.)

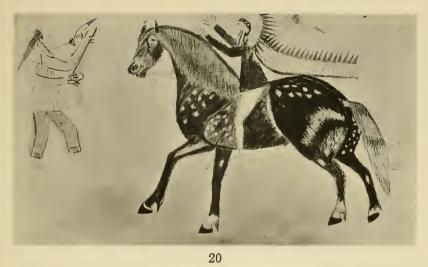
No. 19

Fight with Crows. 200 Sioux—whole tribe of Crows. "Bull" kills warrior. 7 Crows killed. No Sioux killed. "Bull" dressed in war bonnet trimmed with eagle feather. "Bull" 24 years old. Near mouth of Tongue River.

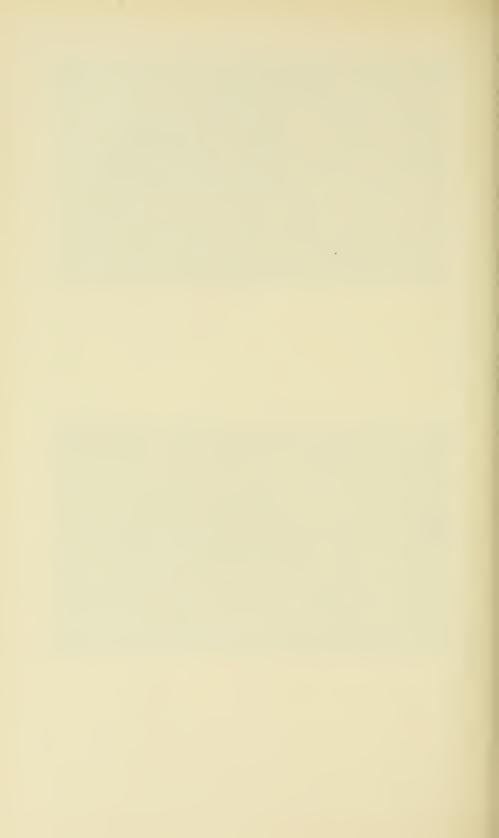
Fight with Assimiboines. 100 Sioux—60 Assimiboines. "Bull" kills warrior. 3 Assinniboines killed. 1 Sioux wounded. Near big fork of the Missouri. "Bull" 29 years old.

No. 21

Fight with Assinniboines. 320 Sioux attacked big winter camp of Assinniboines. Bull kills warrior. 5 Assinniboines killed. No Sioux killed. Did not get in to their (Assinniboines') camp—there were too many and fought too well. Sioux run off after killing these men.







III. THE PETTINGER PICTOGRAPHIC RECORD

During the month of February, 1938, a news release appeared concerning the Sitting Bull autobiographies in the Bureau of American Ethnology. The following letter came as a result:

Oswego, Oregon March 7, 1938

Smithsonian Institution Washington, D. C.

GENTLEMEN:

My uncle the late Dan'l L. Pratt of Seattle was Post Trader at Fort Randall, Dak. Ter. in 1882, 56 years ago and knew Sitting Bull and his band very well. Sitting Bull sketched for him 13 pictures of himself on horseback showing him in action against the Crows, Gros Ventres etc.—each one is drawn on paper 10½ by 8½ inches and marked in print—D. L. Pratt, Post Trader, Fort Randall, 188-. The horses are very well drawn—in Indian style—some in colors. These pictures came to me in book form bound in oil cloth. I now have them with the affidavit of Mr. Pratt in a large walnut frame—they are quite impressive.

Hoping this information will be interesting,

am
Yours truly,
/s/ Mrs. G. H. Pettinger
Oswego, Ore.

The writer communicated at once with Mrs. Pettinger, who very kindly forwarded the pictures to the Bureau of American Ethnology so that they could be included with this publication. They belong to the George Howard Pettinger Collection, which contains several other very interesting Sitting Bull items, including the tomahawk surrendered by Sitting Bull to Lieutenant Ogle on the occasion of Sitting Bull's surrender to the Commanding Officer at Fort Buford, Dakota Territory. The writer wishes here to express his deep appreciation to Mr. Pettinger for making available this interesting addition to the Sitting Bull record.

These pictures, like those of the Smith autobiography, were made at Fort Randall in 1882 and were probably painted from the same paint box, as the shades of the colors used are identical in the two sets. The Pettinger drawings are exactly the same in style but lack the signature. In the Pettinger drawings, Nos. 2 and 5 are unique in that full-face figures are shown. It seems probable that some pictures are missing from the series as originally drawn, for in two instances the descriptive sequence appears to refer to a preceding episode which is not shown.

"Winter" scene. Killing a Gros Ventres Indian—100 Sioux on war path killed 3 Gros Ventres whom they found hunting.²⁶

No. 2

1860. Sitting Bull killing a Crow Indian. One hundred Sioux chased thirty Crows all night. Caught them in the morning and killed them all.²⁷

²⁶ This is the same episode as that shown in No. 21 of the Smith autobiography. The horse is blue-black in color. Sitting Bull is wearing black army trousers with a red stripe. His victim wears a green blanket coat.

²⁷ This is probably the fight that took place in the winter of 1869. See Vestal, p. 115.









Sitting Bull killing a Crow Indian. 40 Sioux against 7 Crows. Sitting Bull killed 3 Crows in this fight.

No. 4 Same fight.

Sitting Bull killing a Crow Indian.28

²⁸ Sitting Bull is here shown wearing the same costume depicted in No. 2. These two pictures are unique in that in three instances the men pictured are shown in full face instead of profile.

No. 6

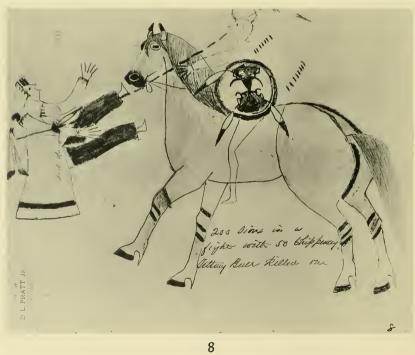
Killing a Flathead Indian in a battle.20

²⁹ Sitting Bull is wearing a shirt covered with green spots.









Killing a Flathead and receiving an arrow wound in left side.30

³⁰ This is the same episode as depicted as No. 16 of the Smith series. This battle with the Flatheads and the particular incident here shown is described by Vestal, p. 125.

No. 8

200 Sioux in a fight with 50 Chippeways. Sitting Bull killed one.31

³¹ Sitting Bull is mounted on a yellow horse, black nose and ear tips. His shield is painted blue. In all of the other pictures in which the shield is shown, the color is green.

Jumping Bull, a Gros Ventres, captured in a fight by Bull—Sitting Bull took a fancy to him and presented him with his war bonnet and horse and permitted him to be free—made chief after this occurrence.⁵²

No. 10

1880. Killing a Crow Indian Scout who belonged to General Miles' command. Sitting Bull wears a war bonnet which once belonged to Crazy Horse.³³

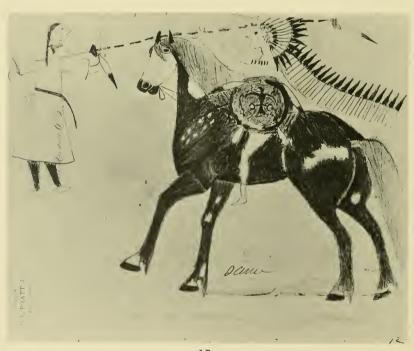
³² This represents the same episode as pictured in No. 13 of the Smith record and No. 5 of the Kimball record.

⁵³ This represents the same episode shown in No. 15 of the Smith record. The horse in each instance is colored a light purple, probably a roan.









Same fight. Killing a Crow who dismounted and fought desperately and wounded Bull in two places.³⁴

No. 12

Same.35

³⁴ This does not refer to the same fight pictured in No. 10. It is the same episode, evidently, as shown in No. 12 of the Smith record and No. 4 of the Kimball record. It was in this encounter that Sitting Bull received the wound in his foot which crippled him for the rest of his life.

³⁵ This, evidently, does not refer to the same fight as depicted in No. 11. Apparently, it represents the capture of an Assiniboin woman, probably on the occasion shown in Nos. 5 and 6 of the Smith record.

Same fight. Killed two. 36

³⁶ Sitting Bull is shown wearing a shirt spotted with red. His opponent is wearing a shirt spotted with green. This may represent the fight between the Sioux and the Assiniboines shown in Nos. 1 and 2 of the Smith record.





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