

## 8-B "Sans Arc Lakota" Ledger Book, 1880–1881

Black Hawk (1832–1890)



8-B.1 Black Hawk (c. 1832–1890), "Sans Arc Lakota" Ledger Book (plate no. 18), 1880–1881. Pen, ink, and pencil on paper, 9 ½ x 15 ½ in. (24.13 x 39.4 cm.). Entire book: 10 ¼ in. x 16 ½ in. x 1 ¾ in. (26.67 x 41.9 x 44.4 cm.); width with book opened: 33 ½ in. (85.1 cm.). T614; Thaw Collection, Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y. Photograph 1998 by John Bigelow Taylor, New York.

### The Art

These pictures are two of the 76 drawings from the collection of Black Hawk, a Plains Indian. His drawings illustrated part of a dream he had, recorded Lakota customs and ceremonies, and showed members of the Crow tribe. The first drawing shows a parade of Crow warriors. The Crow tribe was a traditional enemy of the Lakota. Crow warriors could be identified by their hairstyle. They had a tuft of hair swept up at the top of their heads. The bottom picture shows a Lakota social dance that was performed in a circle. The women painted the part in their hair yellow or red. The men wore feathers in their hair.

### The Artist

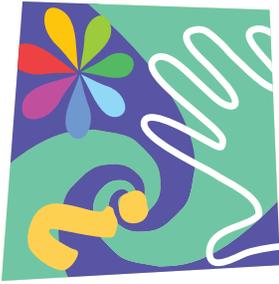
Black Hawk was a member of the Sans Arc Tribe, one of the seven divisions of the Lakota, part of the Sioux Tribe. He was a spiritual leader and had a vision dream. The Lakota followed the great herds of buffalo that provided a source of food, clothing and housing. However, settlers were also hunting the buffalo so there were hardly any left. Black Hawk had trouble feeding his family of four during the harsh winter of 1880–1881. During this time, the Plains tribes were being moved to reservations. William Edward Caton, an Indian trader at a reservation in South Dakota, asked Black Hawk to record his vision dream, offering him 50 cents in trade for every drawing he made. Caton provided sheets of lined writing paper, colored pencils, and a pen. Black Hawk produced 76 drawings through the winter, for which he received \$38 in trade. This was a lot of money at that time. In 1994, the book of drawings sold for almost \$400,000 at an auction. In this collection of drawings, only two are from Black Hawk's dream. The rest of the 74 drawings illustrate the world around the tribe, Lakota customs, and ceremonies and members of the Crow Tribe.



8-B.2 Black Hawk (c. 1832–1890), "Sans Arc Lakota" Ledger Book (plate no. 3), 1880–1881. Pen, ink, and pencil on paper, 9 ½ x 15 ½ in. (24.13 x 39.4 cm.). Entire book: 10 ¼ in. x 16 ½ in. x 1 ¾ in. (26.67 x 41.9 x 44.4 cm.); width with book opened: 33 ½ in. (85.1 cm.). T614; Thaw Collection, Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, N.Y. Photograph 1998 by John Bigelow Taylor, New York.

### The Historical Perspective

Black Hawk's drawings were made during the 1800s, a time of great change for American Indians. As paper and art tools were acquired through trade and other means, ledger art became a favorite form of art for Plains Indian tribes. Ledger books were valued because they were portable and provided many surfaces for drawing and painting, either on blank pages or superimposed on used ones. Black Hawk's drawings followed a long tradition of Plains Indian art. Lakota men painted images on their teepees and buffalo hide robes to show off their brave deeds.



## Conversations and Teaching Activities

Head Start Children ages 3 to 5

Encourage children to look closely at these drawings—the objects, the background, the colors used. Ask questions, introduce new vocabulary, and find books that relate to ledger book drawings or Lakota art.

### Analyzing and Interpreting

Ask the following questions to stimulate thinking and discussion:

- What can we say about the men in the first picture? Children might say they were brave, courageous, warriors.
- Do you know that the costumes and hairstyles of the characters in the drawings tell us about them? Do you see a clue telling you something important about the Indian braves?
- When you see people dancing, how do you feel? How do you feel when you dance? Do the people in the drawings seem happy?
- Is there anything else you would like to say about these drawings?

### Describing



- ✓ What do you see in these drawings?
- ✓ What are the people doing in the drawings?
- ✓ What are the men carrying?
- ✓ All the men have at least one feather. Can you find a feather on each man? Where are they?
- ✓ Can you tell if all the people who have long hair are female? Can you see any of their faces? Do any of the women have feathers? (None of the faces are showing because they have their backs to us. None of the women have feathers.)
- ✓ Do you see the costume colors and long hair on the men and women? Do you see they are wearing braids?



### Books

## Connecting and Extending

### Introducing Vocabulary

braids	material
buffalo	moccasins
clans	paint
deer	reservation
eagle	scout
feathers	shells
fringe	tribe
horses	

*Feathers and Fools* by Mem Fox (Harcourt, 2000)

In a rambling garden beside a clear blue lake, two flocks of birds begin to fear each other because of their differences.

*Iktomi and the Buzzard: A Plains Indian Story* by Paul Goble (Orchard Books, 1994)

Iktomi rides across a river on the back of a buzzard.

*Moonstick: The Seasons of the Sioux* by Eve Bunting (HarperCollins, 1997)

Explore the seasonal changes in nature and customs as the moon-counting stick helps keep track of passing time according to the phases of the moon.

*The Star People: A Lakota Story* by S. D. Nelson (Harry N. Abrams, 2003)

Two lost children are guided through a strange area by their deceased grandmother, who appears as stars in the sky.

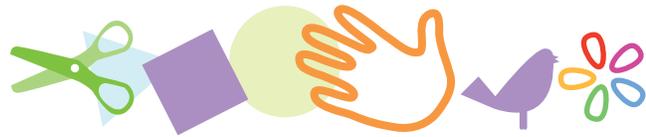


## Connecting and Extending continued...

### Related Family Literacy Experiences

Parents and children can:

- ✓ sing the song "Getting to Know You."
- ✓ read the book *Feathers and Fools* by Mem Fox and talk about a time when they each had a conflict and how it was resolved.
- ✓ take pens and colored pencils to the playground and draw what they see.



### Related Educational Experiences

- ✓ Explain what a journal is. Keep a class journal of children's drawings. Take story dictation about the children's drawings.
- ✓ Have the children do a dance that shows feelings such as "happy" and "sad."
- ✓ Demonstrate braiding. Use yarn, cords, or other materials that are easily braided.
- ✓ Have the children stand and link arms like the people in the second drawing, alternating girls and boys.

*The ideas listed are just a few of the many activities that could be used to introduce or extend children's learning. Your knowledge of your children and families supports your ability to ensure positive learning experiences and outcomes for students. As an educator, you probably have ideas for books, songs, finger plays, and activities that you have thought of when introducing or extending children's learning related to the "A Head Start on Picturing America" artworks. We encourage you to confer with your colleagues, visit the local library or bookstore, and share your ideas with others.*