



Image and Identity by Ted Longbottom

Winter Counts

The winter count was a traditional form of record-keeping practised by some prairie nations, including the Piikani (Peigan), the Siksika (Blackfoot), and the Dakota (Sioux). A winter count consisted of a single image, typically painted on hide, which represented a significant, memorable, or widely known event that had occurred over the course of a year. Winter counts were supplemented by more extensive oral histories. The image on hide was intended as a mnemonic device (recall aid) to trigger the memory of the record keeper.