



# **FORT MARION AND BEYOND**

## **Native American Ledger Drawings, 1865-1900**

in collaboration with Donald Ellis Gallery

January 25 - March 2, 2024

**DAVID NOLAN GALLERY**

24 East 81st Street New York NY 10028 212 925 6190 davidnolangallery.com

David Nolan Gallery is pleased to present *Fort Marion and Beyond: Native American Ledger Drawings, 1865 - 1900*, a major survey of Plains pictographic art in collaboration with Donald Ellis Gallery, on view from January 25 - March 2 to coincide with Master Drawings New York.

This exhibition features the most important group of Plains Ledger Drawings created by Arapaho, Cheyenne, Hidatsa, Kiowa, and Lakota warrior artists since the 1996 exhibition organized by the Drawing Center, New York, and The American Federation of Arts, *Plains Indian Drawings, 1865-1935: Pages from a Visual History*, which in 1997 traveled to the Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin; Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska; and Frick Art Museum, Pittsburg, PA.

*Fort Marion and Beyond* will showcase over 100 works on paper that collectively demonstrate the preeminent importance of Plains pictographic art to the documentation, preservation and dissemination of the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the Native Americans of the Great Plains, and their essential but underrecognized contributions to the art history of the United States.

Over 75% of the drawings in this exhibition have never been shown in North America before.

At the core of the exhibition are works by two artists: Nokkoist (Bear's Heart), of the Cheyenne Nation, and Ohettoint, of the Kiowa Tribe, who were among 72 Indigenous warriors imprisoned without trial at Fort Marion in St. Augustine, FL for their alleged connection to the Red River War, a U.S. military campaign aimed at the forced displacement and migration of Southern Plains tribes onto reservations. During their incarceration (May 1875 - April 1878), fort commander Captain Richard Henry Pratt attempted to assimilate the nomadic warriors into white Protestant culture: altering their physical appearance (cutting their hair, dressing them in uniforms); educating them in subjects such as English and arithmetic (Harriet Beecher Stowe was a teacher); and providing them with sketchbooks and art supplies for drawing. As Pratt encouraged the prisoners to sell their drawings and retain all the income from the sales, many sold their work to an interested middle class. Other drawings were gifted to high-ranking politicians in an attempt to promote Pratt's assimilation policies.

In the face of the deliberate erasure of Native American cultures, the drawings offered an avenue for resistance and a means of documenting a threatened way of life and bringing it to the attention of the colonizers. The artworks created at Fort Marion are rooted in a long-standing Plains pictographic tradition of recording both personal and communal histories, as well as expressing the power and prestige of particular warriors. The Indigenous peoples painted on rock surface, hide, and later on muslin and paper, a medium that was introduced to them when Euro-Americans began moving into the Great Plains region in the 1830s. The Native Americans acquired ledger books, along with tools like pens and colored pencils, through trade or by taking them from dead soldiers on the battlefield, and then, in a palimpsestic gesture, covered previous owners' inventory records with their own colorful figurations.

(Simultaneous with their incursion into the land, the Euro-Americans initiated the systemic and nearly successful extinction of the buffalo as a means of starving the Indigenous peoples into submission and moving them off their land. Buffalo had provided the nomadic warriors with not only their livelihood, but also the hides that had previously served as canvases for their pictographic paintings.)

The exhibition also includes exceptional examples of ledger drawings created from the pre-reservation to the reservation periods. Though stylistic differences naturally exist among the artists, the drawings all share a kind of visual vernacular, a directness and immediacy born out of a reverence for storytelling. The Indigenous peoples of the Great Plains can claim a long tradition of oral storytelling and the tropes of the art – rhythm, repetition, narration – are made manifest in the artists' patterning of garments, the processions of tribes, and the banners unfurled; in the dazzling pictorial accounts of dances and ceremonies, of warriors on horseback, and of the rituals of camp life that were disappearing as tribes were increasingly forced onto reservations. Remembrance resides in a visual clarity: an economy of line, a simplicity of form, and an enthusiasm for color that together create an emphatic call to be seen.



*It is an honor to have the opportunity to show the drawings of the Indigenous peoples of the Great Plains, and that these bear an artistic and historical significance that rivals that of any culture within the traditional Western canon. It was my pleasure to organize this exhibition in collaboration with my friend and colleague Donald Ellis, who has almost single-handedly brought the drawings of the Native Americans to the attention of an international audience.*

- David Nolan

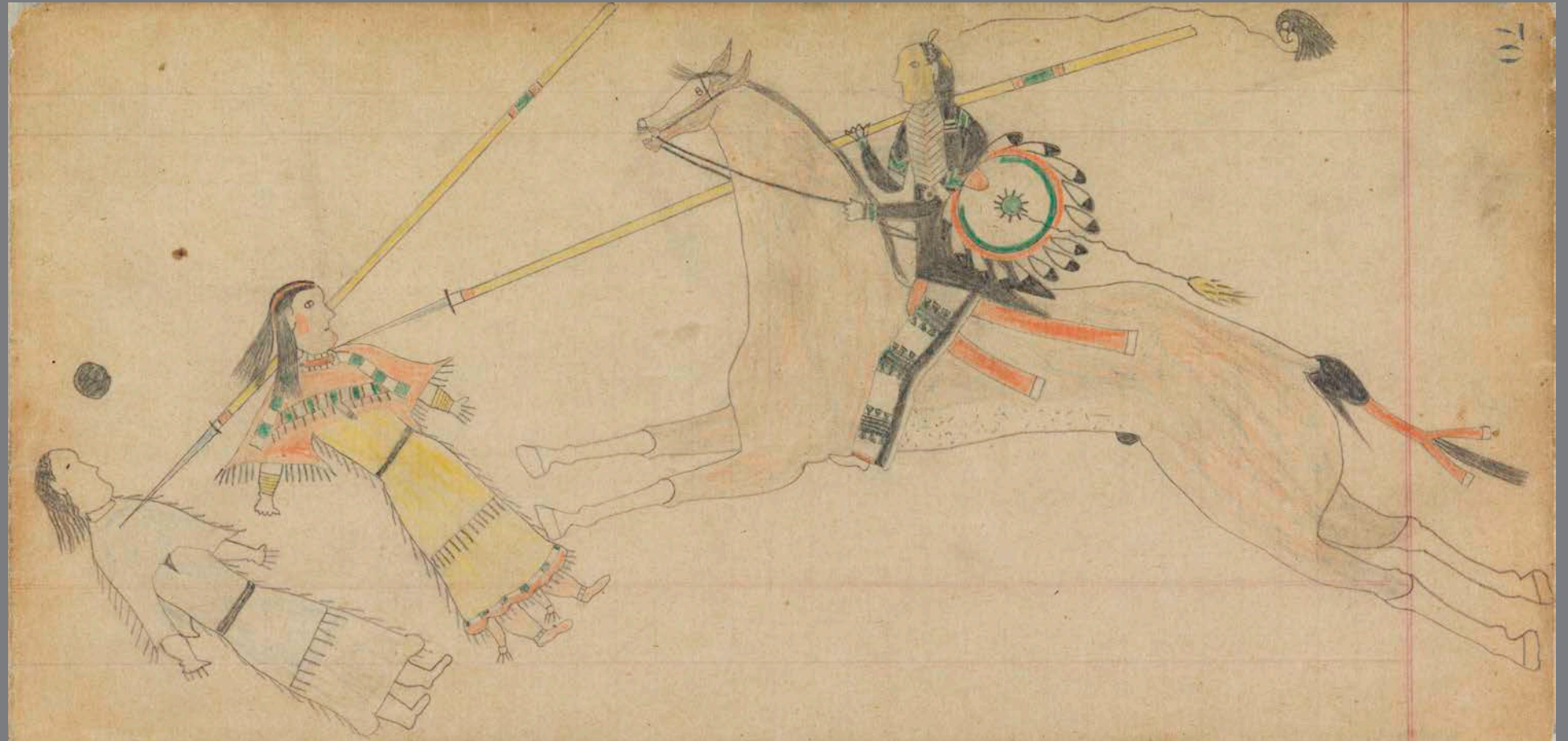




## NATIVE AMERICAN LEDGER DRAWINGS

Ledger Drawings, so called because of the lined accounting paper on which they were first created, are rooted in longstanding pictographic traditions on the Great Plains, a vast area extending east of the Rocky Mountains and west of the Mississippi River. Predominantly created by male warrior artists, figural painting on rock, hide robes, tipis, and later on paper and muslin presented a way to record personal and collective histories. The earliest historical records are petroglyphs and pictographic paintings on rock walls. Later, the martial accomplishment of individual warriors were depicted on hide robes and tipis, using mineral and vegetal pigments applied with bone and stick drawing implements. Shield covers bore the imagery associated with individual visions and experiences, while collective histories were recorded on winter counts, a form of pictorial calendar. With the establishment of trading posts and the systematic extermination of the buffalo herds after 1850 the practice of painting on buffalo hide gradually diminished. Instead, artists transferred pictographic conventions to paper, muslin, and canvas, colored pencils, ink wash, crayon, watercolor paints and brushes.

Ledger Drawings generally illustrate the deeds of a particular warrior, including warring exploits, hunting feats, and acts of great personal heroism such as counting coup on an enemy. Viewed communally, they are an expression of the warrior's accumulation of spiritual power and the rights, privileges, and obligations associated with them.



Ledger Art is highly conventionalized: typically oriented from right to left, the drawings tend to foreground a single warrior and his horse. Facial features are rendered schematically, while the detailed rendition of dress and accoutrements serve to identify the protagonist as well as their rank within particular societies. With the forced relocation of Plains nations onto government reservations, new subject-matter including ceremonial life, domestic hunting, and courtship replaced the earlier focus on military feats. In visualising the transition from a semi-nomadic life to government reservations, Ledger Art directly reflects the changing cultural, social, and political landscapes brought upon by American imperialist expansions on the Great Plains, and is an invaluable chronicle of adaptation by Plains peoples.

**ATTRIBUTED TO MA NIM ICK**  
(Minimic or Eagle Head, d. 1881)  
Cheyenne, Central Plains  
*Ledger Drawing*, ca. 1875  
Vincent Price Ledger Book (p. 70),  
graphite and colored pencil on lined paper  
5 1/2 x 11 1/2 in (14 x 29.2 cm)

## FORT MARION DRAWINGS

A special period within the body of Ledger Art is constituted by those drawings created at Fort Marion, in St. Augustine, Florida, between 1875-78. The historical significance of Fort Marion drawings is immense: they stand at the very beginning of the widespread cultural assimilation efforts that shaped U.S. policies for almost one and a half centuries. In contrast to mainstream narratives, drawings from Fort Marion speak to these experiences from an Indigenous point of view.

Amongst Plains nations it was customary to designate individuals to record significant personal and communal events in pictographic form. Most of the warrior artists working at Fort Marion were brought up in that tradition, yet they also introduced a new form of image-making. Rather than focusing on the accumulation of power and prestige, they produced complex narrative scenes directly reflecting on their lived experiences inside the fort and beyond.

Repeated subject-matter includes the arduous journey from Oklahoma Territory to Fort Marion by horse cart, sailboat, and train; the military drills and classes at Fort Marion; and important social and ceremonial occasions prior to their incarceration, including buffalo and antelope hunts, ceremonial processions, and the Sun Dance.

Fort Marion artists also introduced landscape elements, often employing panoramic vision to reflect on the changing environments they found themselves exposed to. In contrasting the visual splendor of Plains nations with the military homogeneity inside the fort, Fort Marion artists subtly undermined the very policies Pratt sought to advocate for. Graphic masterpieces, these images contain a visual vocabulary that encompasses Indigenous ways of being and knowing the world at the height of military and political pressure for their erasure. As such they must be considered an exceptionally important aspect of American art history.



**NOKKOIST (Bear's Heart, 1851-1882)**  
Cheyenne, Central Plains  
*Observing the Guards from the Fort*, ca. 1876  
Bear's Heart Drawing Book  
ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper  
8 5/8 x 11 3/8 in (21.9 x 28.9 cm)



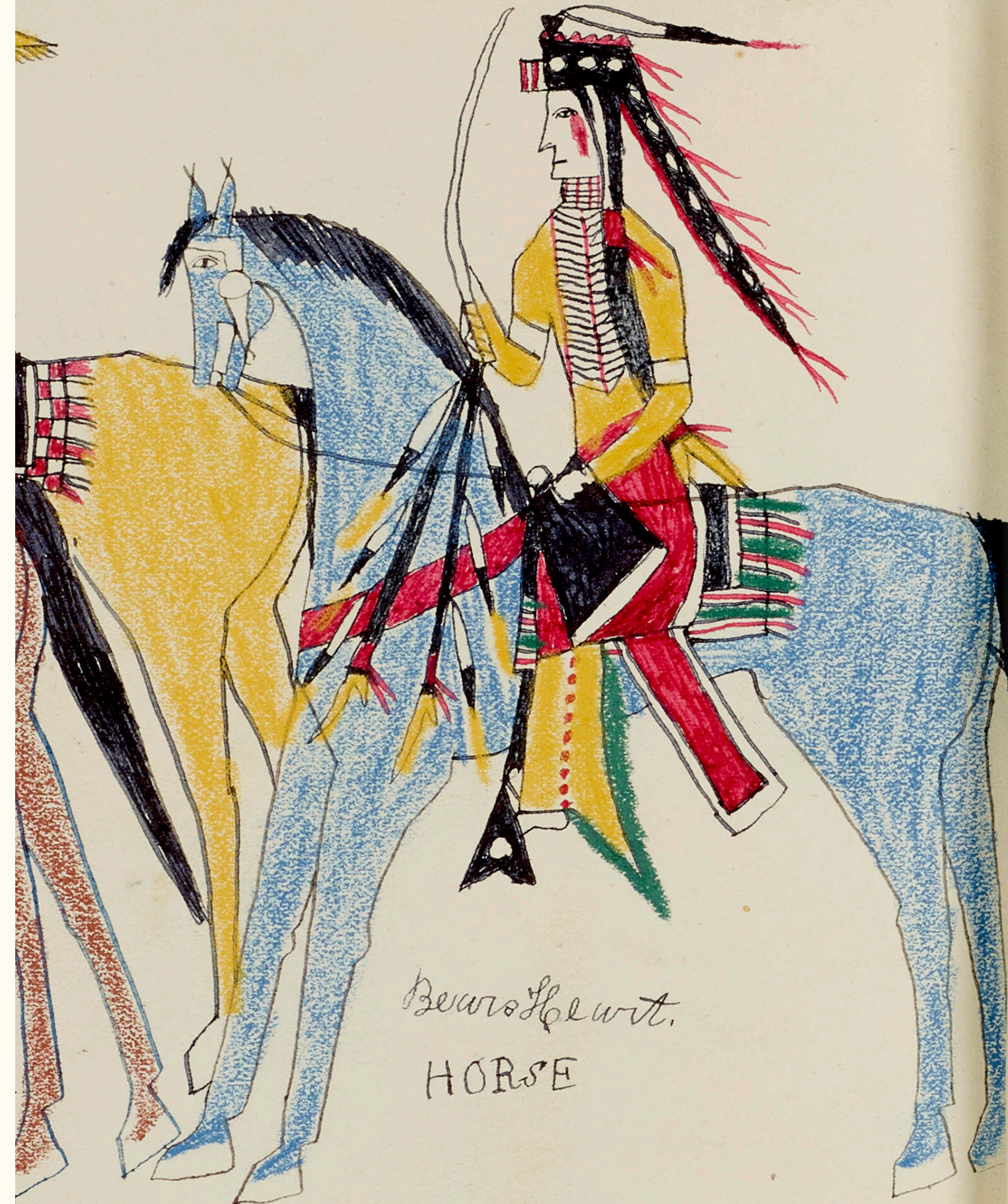


## NOKKOIST (BEAR'S HEART, 1851-1882) CHEYENNE, CENTRAL PLAINS

Nokkoist was a 24-year-old warrior of the Cheyenne nation when he surrendered himself and his weapons to the U.S. Army during the punishing campaign it initiated against the Southern Plains tribes beginning in July 1874. He was arrested and later transported to his imprisonment at Fort Marion, where he arrived on May 21, 1875. There, Nokkoist became one of the most prolific and technically advanced artists among his fellow prisoners; when fort commander Capt. Pratt presented sketchbooks to his superiors as gifts, he often included those of Nokkoist (as well as Ohettoint) for what he regarded as their exceptional artistry.

Upon release from Fort Marion in April 1878, Nokkoist was among the 17 Plains warriors who continued the education begun by Capt. Pratt at the Hampton Institute in Virginia, a newly established school for emancipated Blacks (Dr. Booker T. Washington is an alumnus.) Students at the school learned vocational skills, such as carpentry and farming, in addition to their academic studies. During his three years there, Nokkoist distinguished himself among his classmates, and was chosen to present the "Indian talk" at the 1880 anniversary celebration attended by, among others, U.S. President Rutherford B. Hayes.

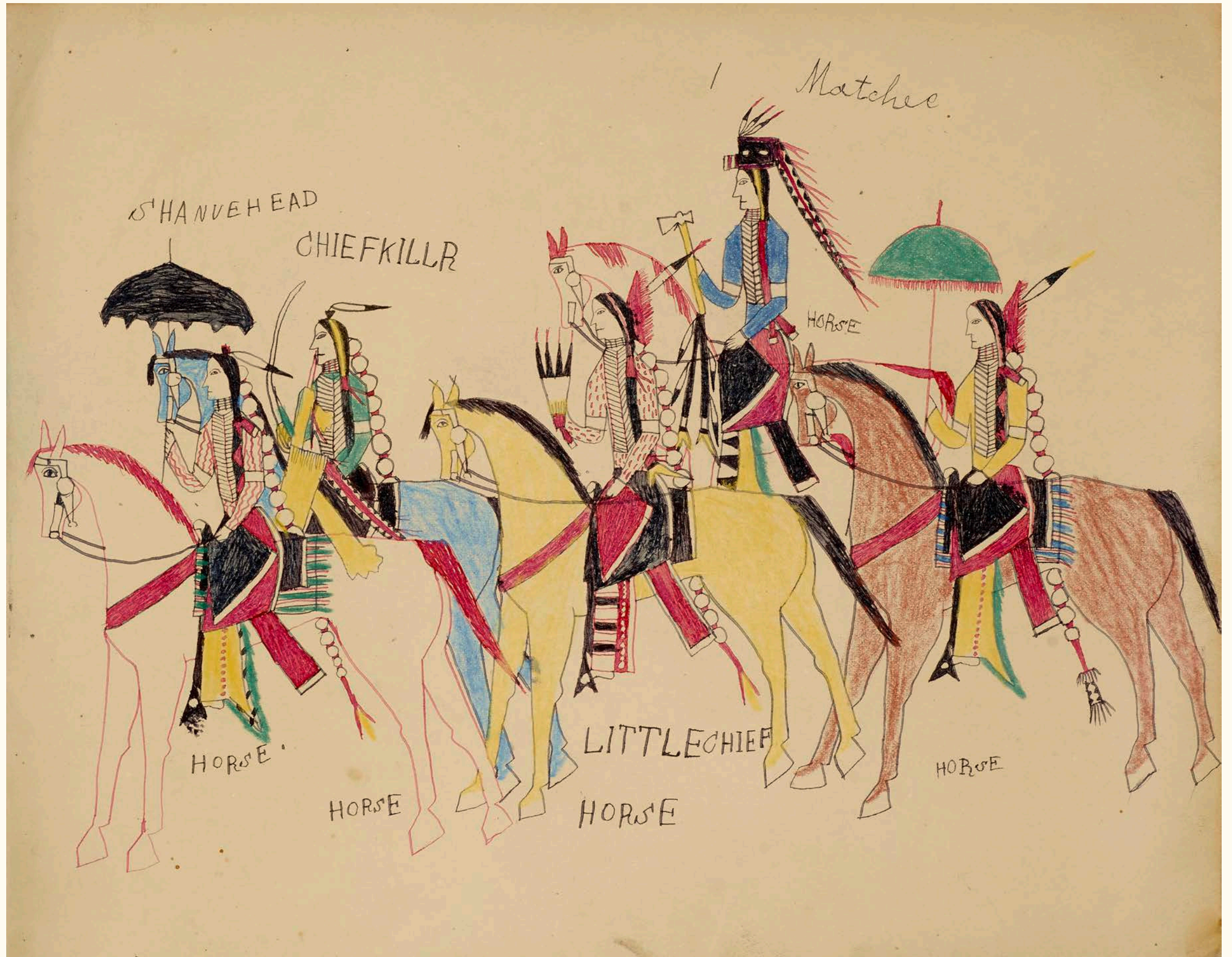
Increasingly troubled by scrofula (a form of tuberculosis that occurs in the neck), Nokkoist returned home in April 1881 wearing the grey uniform of the school and bearing gifts for his family along with carpentry tools and a Bible. The return to camp life—or rather, what was now reservation life—proved difficult: among the challenges the former warrior faced were opposition from conservative tribesmen, land unsuitable for the farming skills he had learned at Hampton, and the harsh and restrictive governance of U.S. forces. Nokkoist succumbed to scrofula on January 25, 1882—not a year after his return—and was buried in the agency cemetery next to a former chief.





*Cheyennes*

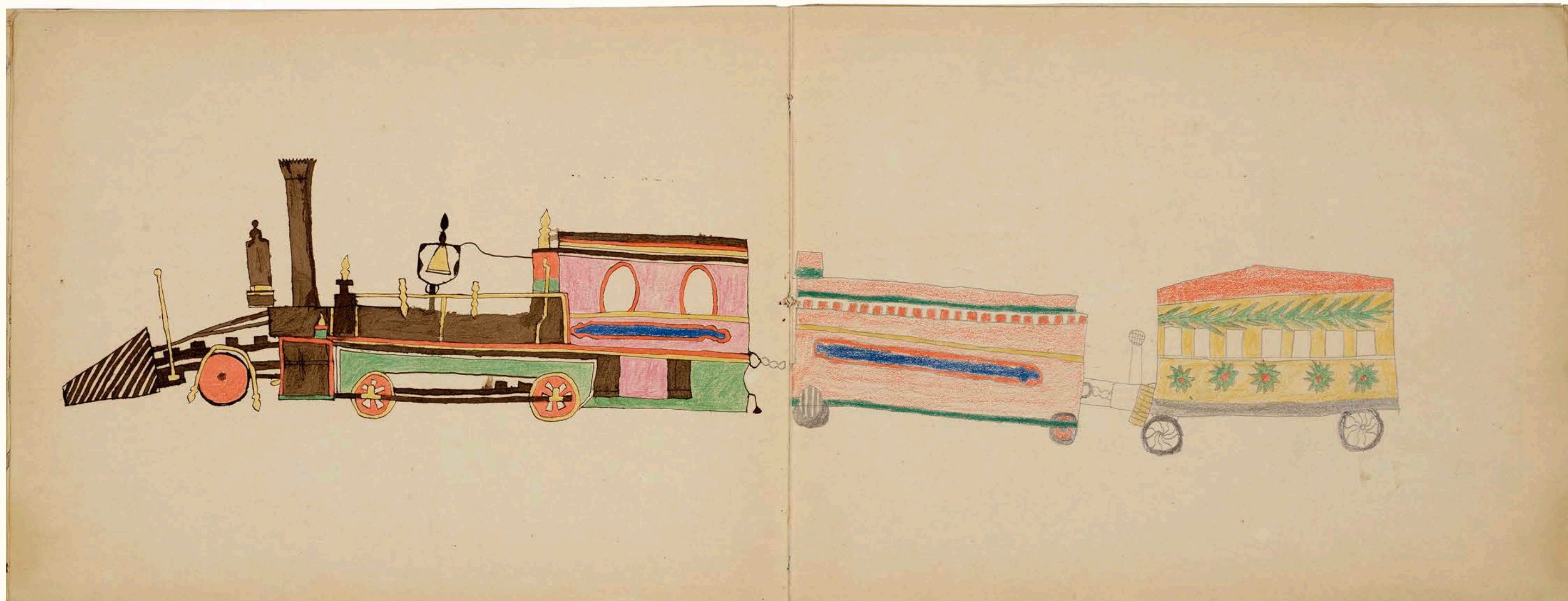
**NOKKOIST (Bear's Heart, 1851-1882)**  
Cheyenne, Central Plains  
*Nokkoist and Cheyenne Warriors  
on Horseback, ca. 1876*  
Bear's Heart and Ohettoint Drawing Book  
Likely inscribed by Bear's Heart identifying  
each warrior  
ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper  
8 5/8 x 11 3/8 in (21.9 x 28.9 cm)



**NOKKOIST (Bear's Heart, 1851-1882)**  
Cheyenne, Central Plains  
*Nokkoist and Cheyenne Warriors  
on Horseback, ca. 1876*  
Bear's Heart and Ohettoint Drawing Book  
Likely inscribed by Bear's Heart identifying  
each warrior  
ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper  
8 5/8 x 11 3/8 in (21.9 x 28.9 cm)

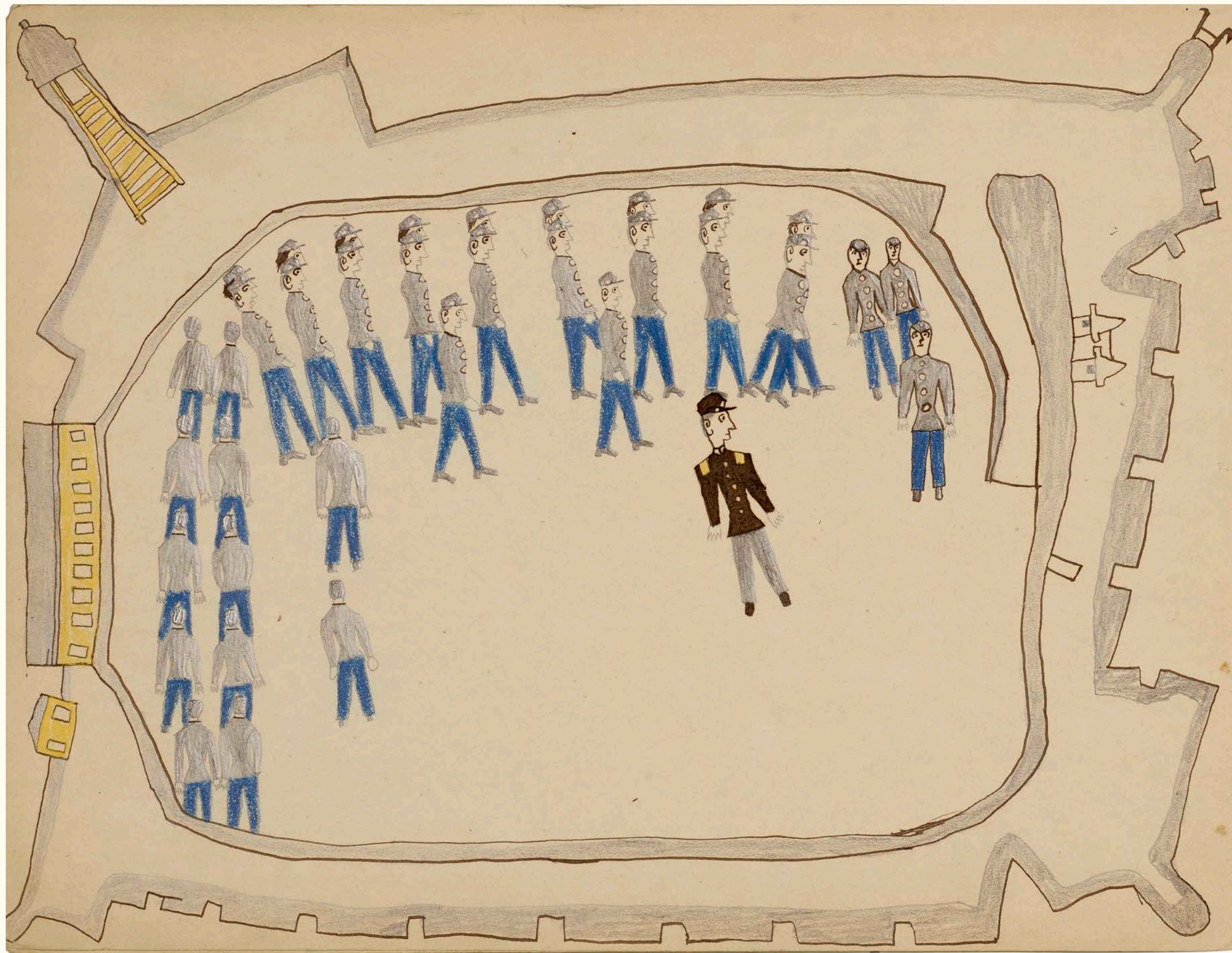


**NOKKOIST (Bear's Heart, 1851-1882)**  
Cheyenne, Central Plains  
*Cheyenne Feast*, ca. 1876  
Bear's Heart and Ohettoint Drawing Book  
ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper  
8 5/8 x 11 3/8 in (21.9 x 28.9 cm)

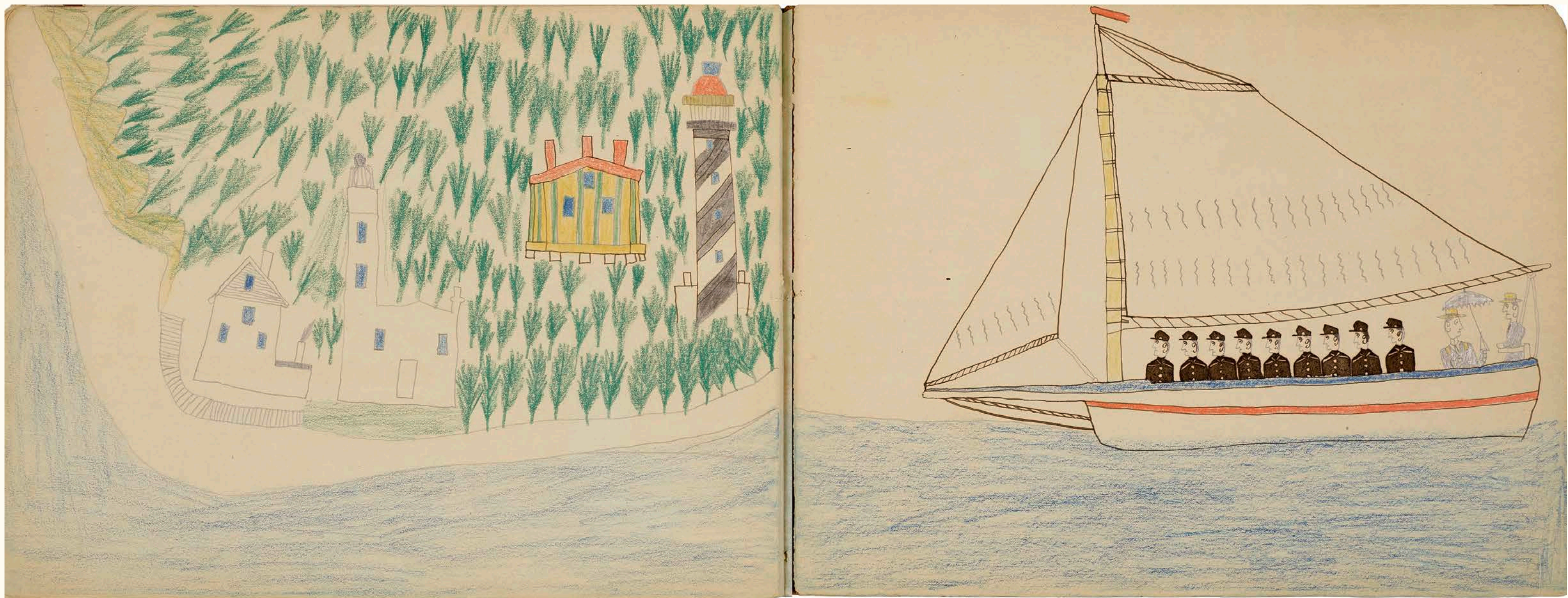


**NOKKOIST (Bear's Heart, 1851-1882)**  
Cheyenne, Central Plains  
*Locomotive*, ca. 1876  
Bear's Heart Drawing Book  
ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper  
8 5/8 x 22 3/4 in (21.9 x 57.8 cm)





**NOKKOIST (Bear's Heart, 1851-1882)**  
Cheyenne, Central Plains  
*Fort Marion Parade Ground, ca. 1876*  
Bear's Heart Drawing Book  
ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper  
8 5/8 x 11 3/8 in (21.9 x 28.9 cm)



**NOKKOIST (Bear's Heart, 1851-1882)**

Cheyenne, Central Plains

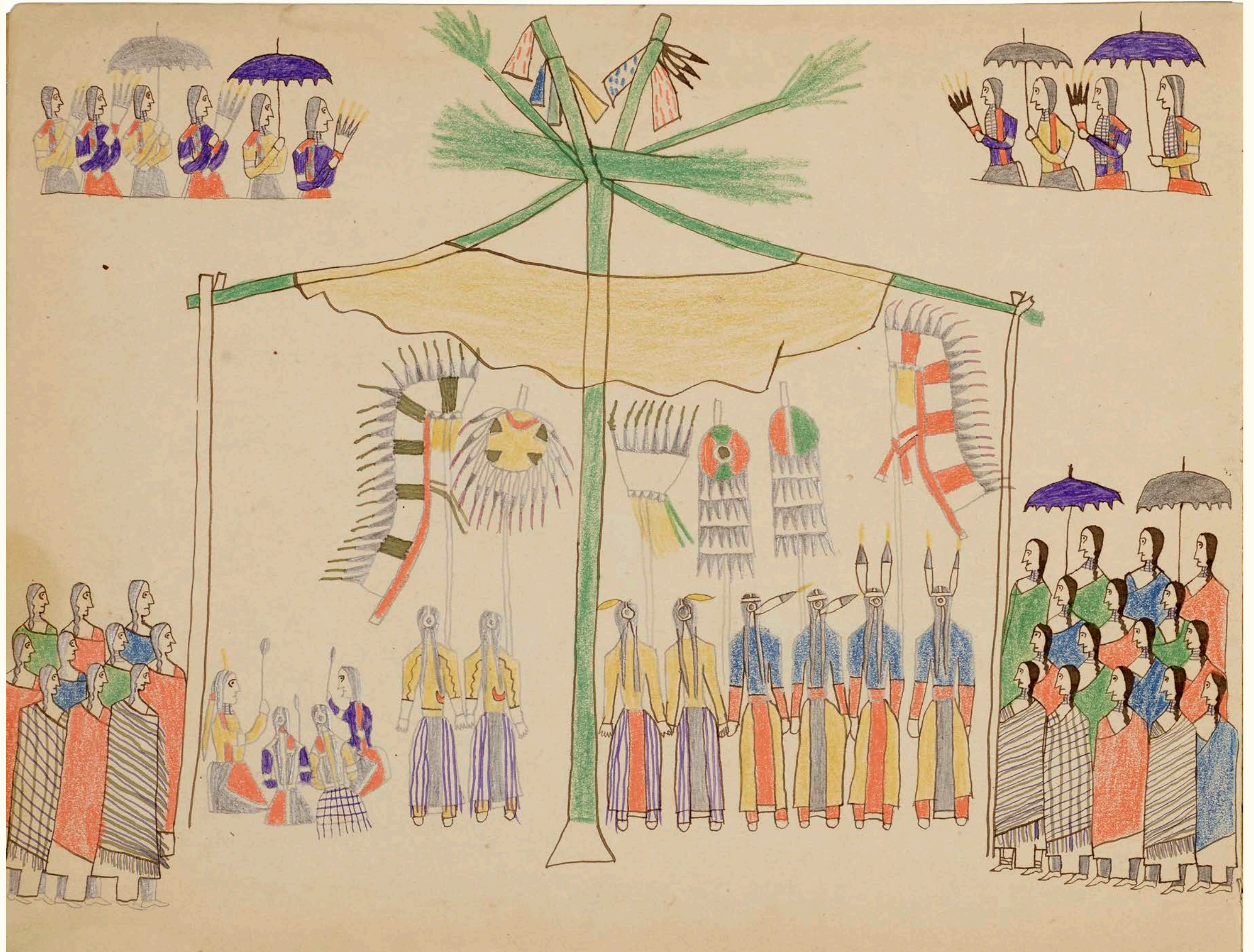
*Approaching Fort Marion by Sea, ca. 1876*

Bear's Heart Drawing Bookink, graphite  
and colored pencil on paper

8 5/8 x 22 3/4 in (21.9 x 57.8 cm)



**NOKKOIST (Bear's Heart, 1851-1882)**  
Cheyenne, Central Plains  
*Observing the Sun Dance, ca. 1876*  
Bear's Heart Drawing Book  
ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper  
8 5/8 x 11 3/8 in (21.9 x 28.9 cm)





**NOKKOIST (Bear's Heart, 1851-1882)**  
Cheyenne, Central Plains  
*Meeting Between Cheyennes and  
Osage, ca. 1876*  
Bear's Heart Drawing Book  
ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper  
8 5/8 x 11 3/8 in (21.9 x 28.9 cm)

**NOKKOIST (Bear's Heart, 1851-1882)**

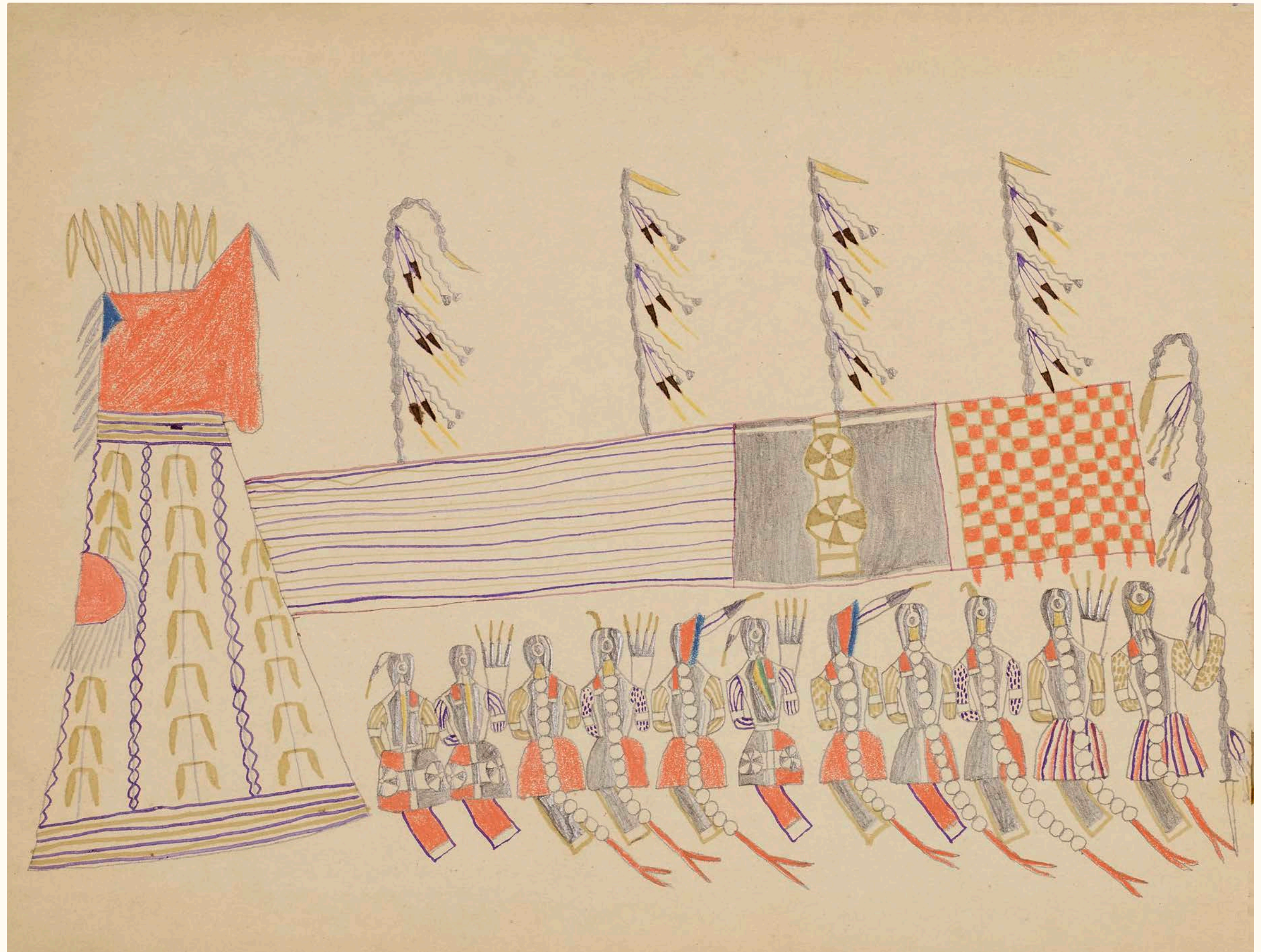
Cheyenne, Central Plains

*Cheyenne Society Gathering, ca. 1876*

Bear's Heart Drawing Book

ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper

8 5/8 x 11 3/8 in (21.9 x 28.9 cm)





**NOKKOIST (Bear's Heart, 1851-1882)**  
Cheyenne, Central Plains  
*Cheyenne Warrior Procession*, ca. 1876  
Bear's Heart Drawing Book  
ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper  
8 5/8 x 11 3/8 in (21.9 x 28.9 cm)



*Chevenues making friend*

**NOKKOIST (Bear's Heart, 1851-1882)**  
**and OHETTOINT (1852-1934)**  
Bear's Heart and Ohettoint Drawing Book  
recto/verso

RECTO, PREVIOUS PAGE:

**NOKKOIST**

Cheyenne, Central Plains  
*Cheyennes Making Friends*  
ca. 1876

ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper

8 5/8 x 11 3/8 in (21.9 x 28.9 cm)

Inscribed "Cheyennes making friends"

VERSO, THIS PAGE:

**OHETTOINT**

Kiowa, Central Plains  
*Ohettoint and Wife, ca. 1876*

ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper

8 5/8 x 11 3/8 in (21.9 x 28.9 cm)

Inscribed "Young Kiowa and Wife" and  
"Saul"



## OHETTOINT (1852-1934)

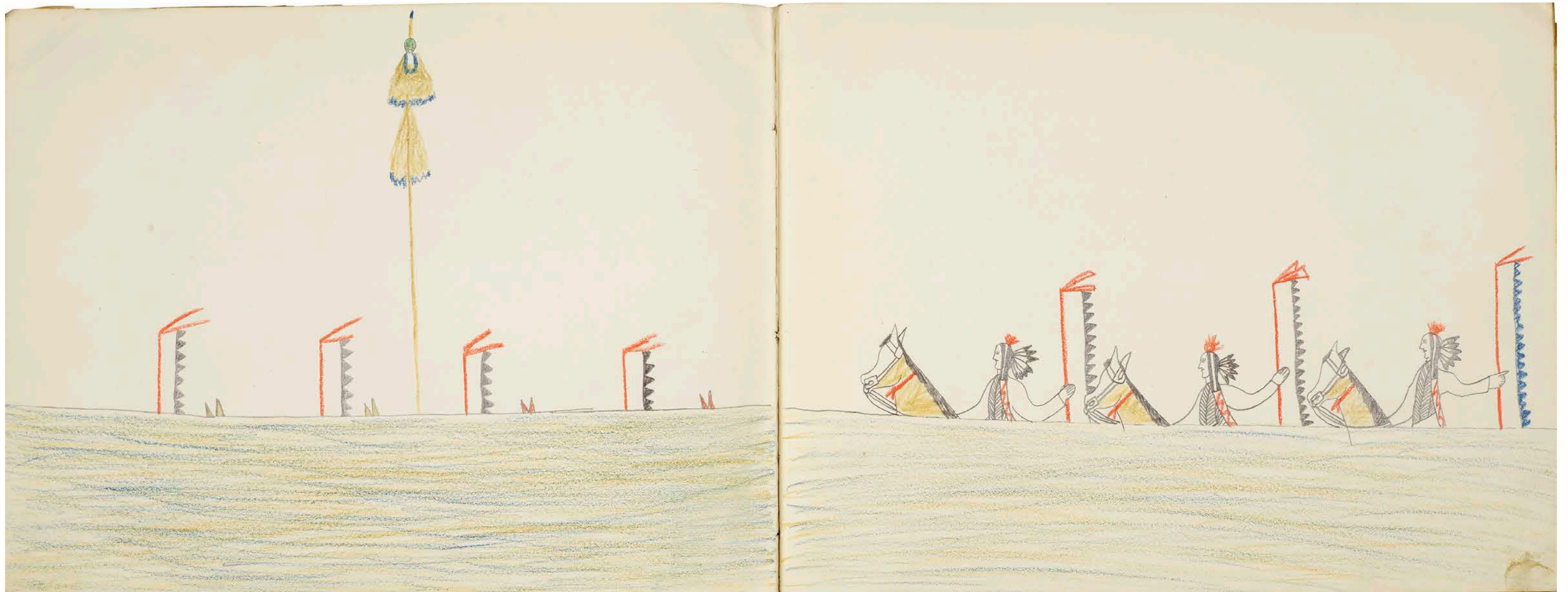
### KIOWA, CENTRAL PLAINS

Ohettoint was a warrior of the Kiowa nation who participated in the 1868 Battle of Washita as well as an unsuccessful attack on approaching U.S. soldiers that led to his surrender and imprisonment at Fort Marion from 1875-1878. There, he not only drew prolifically, but also learned the breadmaking trade and soon became the head baker at the fort; visiting writer Harriet Beecher Stowe noted his superior aptitude for the culinary art.

Like his fellow inmate Nokkoist, Ohettoint attended the Hampton Institute for further study after his release from prison and was among seven Indian men that Capt. Pratt took with him to Washington, D.C. to lobby President Hayes for a school of their own. In 1879, he became one of the first to attend the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, a boarding school founded by Pratt on the same philosophy of cultural assimilation that had guided his educational efforts at Fort Marion. At Carlisle, Ohettoint expanded his artistic practice with experiments in watercolor, marking one of the furthest departures from traditional Plains Indian pictographic style. Artistic talent ran in the family: one of Ohettoint's brothers also became well known for his drawings, and both their father and uncle kept calendar records for the Kiowa. After his father's death, Ohettoint invited eminent tribesmen to paint pictographic records of their victories from pre-reservation life on his tipi.

In 1880, Ohettoint left Carlisle to return home to Kiowa land (now controlled by the U.S.), where he worked for the government agents in various capacities (carpenter, teacher, office worker) before enrolling in the Indian Police force. After 15 years of service, Ohettoint was discharged by a U.S. agent who discovered that he had more than one wife (customary for a Kiowa man of his stature). In 1908, he bought a four-room house near Anadarko, Oklahoma for \$700, a big sum for the time, and was later reported to be farming the land. Ohettoint died in 1934 and was buried in the Red Stone Baptist Cemetery.





**OHETTOINT** (1852-1934)

Kiowa, Central Plains

*Warrior Procession on Horseback*, ca. 1876

Ohettoint Drawing Book

ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper

8 5/8 x 22 3/4 in (21.9 x 57.8 cm)



**OHETTOINT** (1852-1934)

Kiowa, Central Plains

*Kiowa Warrior with Flag*, ca. 1876

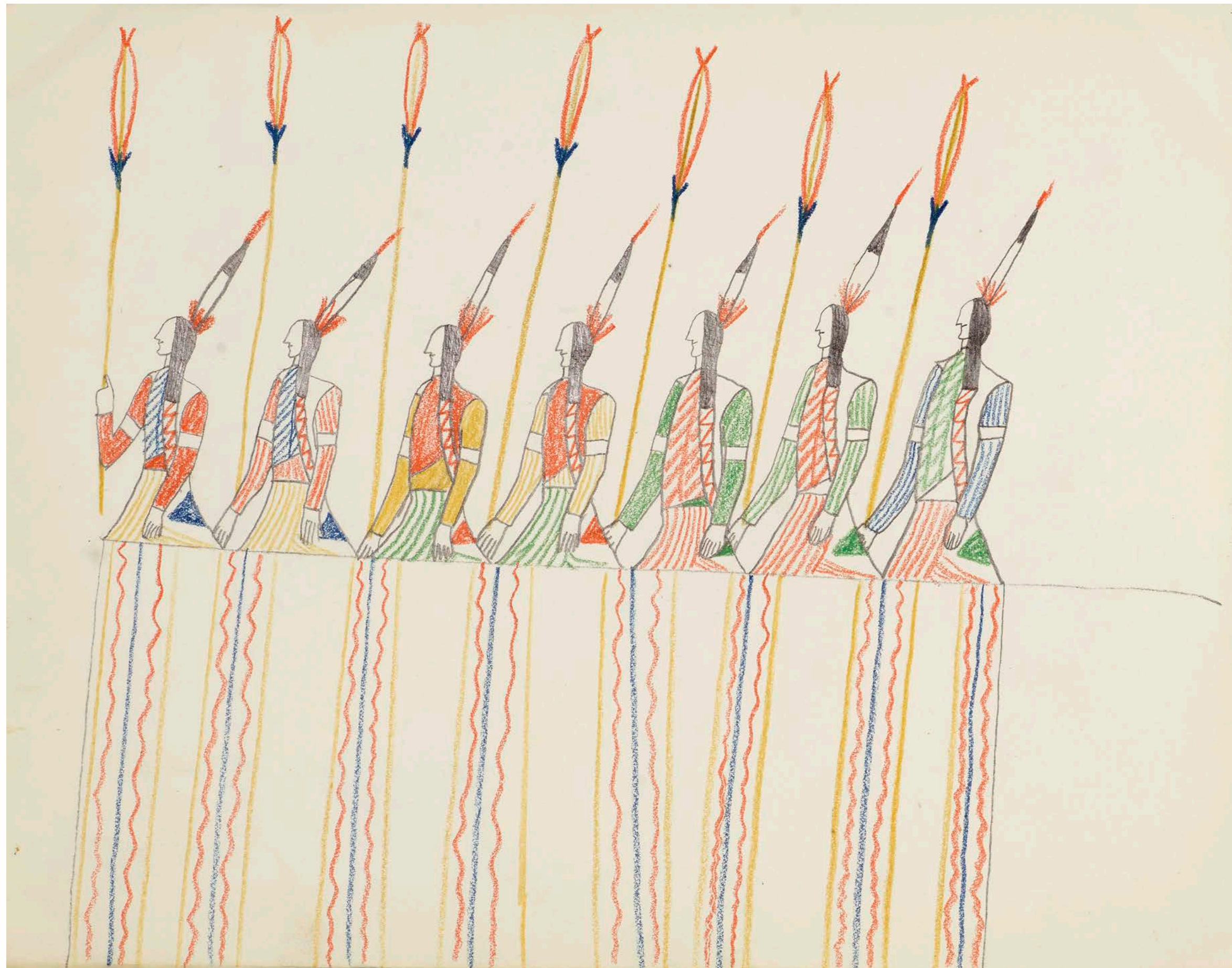
Ohettoint Drawing Book

ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper

8 5/8 x 11 3/8 in (21.9 x 28.9 cm)







**OGETON** (1852-1934)  
Kiowa, Central Plains  
*Warrior Society Procession*, ca. 1876  
Ogeton Drawing Book  
ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper  
8 5/8 x 11 3/8 in (21.9 x 28.9 cm)



**OHETTOINT** (1852-1934)

Kiowa, Central Plains

*Ohettoint and Family*, ca. 1876

Ohettoint Drawing Book

ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper

8 5/8 x 11 3/8 in (21.9 x 28.9 cm)

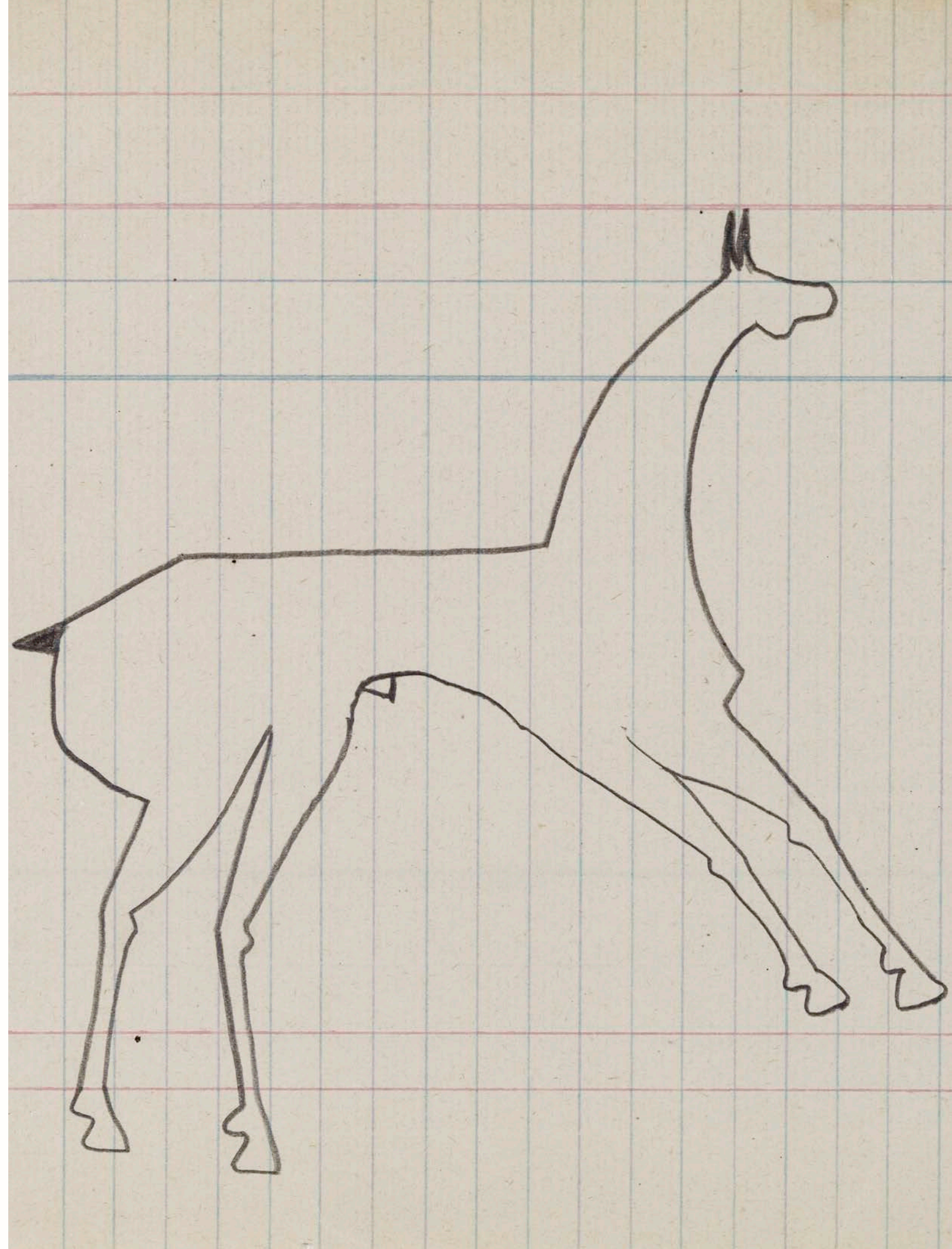
## CEDAR TREE LEDGER BOOK, CA. 1880

### SOUTHERN ARAPAHO, CENTRAL PLAINS

Not much is known about Cedar Tree, the Southern Arapaho warrior artist that this ledger book is named after. Around 1882, the year the Cedar Tree Ledger Book was first collected, he likely resided nearby the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency in Darlington, Oklahoma. Cedar Tree's autobiographical drawings describe a man of great accomplishment who possessed an extraordinary visual memory and demonstrated a remarkable attention to detail. Contrary to the conventions of Ledger Art and most Plains pictographic traditions where we see the action in motion from right to left, Cedar Tree's mounted warriors enter the composition from the left-hand side of the page. The consistent depiction of himself holding a lance in his left hand as well as the characteristic left-to-right orientation of his drawings suggests that the artist was left-handed.

The fifty-six drawings comprising the Cedar Tree Ledger Book are the result of a collaborative effort between five or six Native American artists from the Kiowa, Southern Arapaho and Southern Cheyenne nations. The last page of the book contains a list, handwritten in English, likely by its first non-Indigenous owner, that briefly describes the content of each drawing as well as the tribal identity of its artist, an uncommon feature in ledger books. "Big Tree" is the first name listed in the inventory. A comparison with the U.S. census from the years corresponding to the collection of the book indicates that the same warrior likely went by the name Cedar Tree. This instance illustrates a common issue arising from the transliteration of Native American names to the English language for government use.

A number of drawings in the exhibition show a single horse silhouette placed against the lined accounting paper on which they were created. These compositions are likely preliminary depictions of one of the recurring motifs of the Ledger Book. The drawings demonstrate the exceptional fluidity with which Cedar Tree was able to capture the powerful presence of the horse. Drawn in a single sweeping motion, the images exhibit not only remarkable understanding of anatomic detail but are imbued with the power of movement. Exemplifying Cedar Tree's distinct artistic vision, the drawings capture the nobility and courage of the horse, revered for its agility and strength in battle.







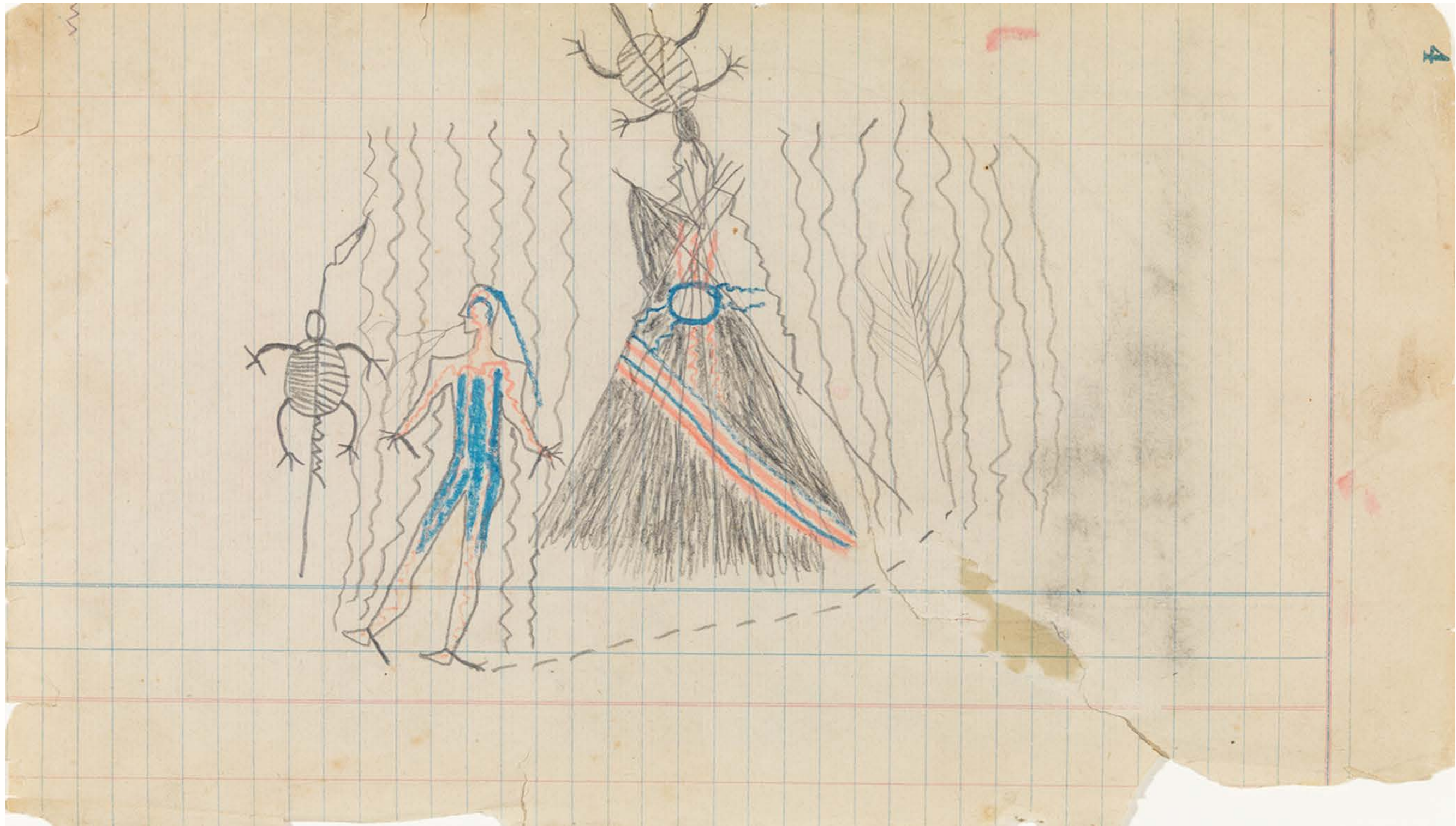
**ATTRIBUTED TO CEDAR TREE**

Southern Arapaho, Central Plains

*Ledger Drawings*, ca. 1880

Cedar Tree Ledger Book

16 drawings, each: graphite on lined paper, 7 1/4 x 12 1/2 in (18.4 x 31.8 cm)



**ATTRIBUTED TO CEDAR TREE**

Southern Arapaho, Central Plains

*Visionary Drawing*, ca. 1880

Cedar Tree Ledger Book

ink, crayon and graphite on lined paper

7 1/4 x 12 1/2 in (18.4 x 31.8 cm)



**ANONYMOUS ARTIST**

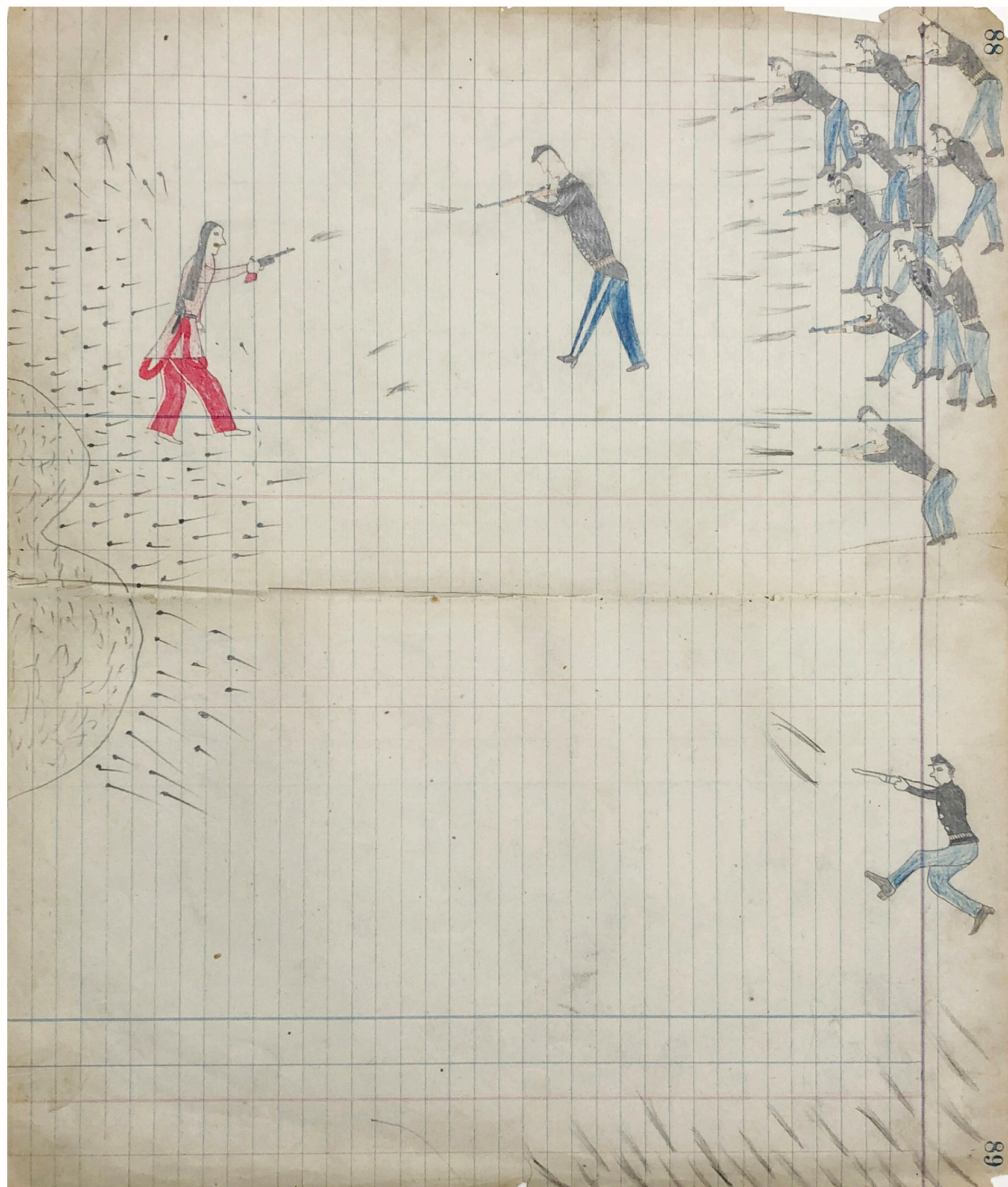
Cheyenne, Central Plains

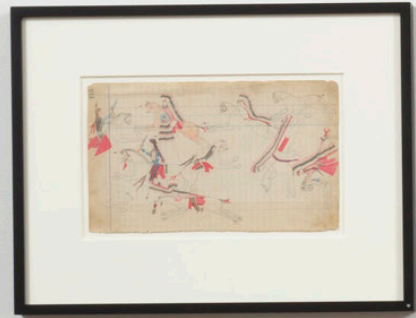
*Ledger Drawing*, ca. 1880

Cedar Tree Ledger Book

ink, crayon and graphite on lined paper

14 1/2 x 12 1/2 in (36.8 x 31.8 cm)





**TIE CREEK LEDGER BOOK**  
**ANONYMOUS ARTIST, CA. 1870**  
CHEYENNE, CENTRAL PLAINS

The Tie Creek Ledger Book is an impressive example among a body of early ledger books created by Native American warriors across the Northern Plains to record their martial feats and vision quests. Made by an anonymous Cheyenne warrior circa 1870, the pages of the Tie Creek Ledger Book were penned with a variety of drawing instruments: ink, graphite and colored pencils. From the assortment of drawing materials and the numerous hunting, raiding, combat and visionary scenes created with them, a contextual map of this warrior's quickly changing life can be gleaned.

Native American sovereignty had been greatly compromised following the signing in to law of the Indian Removal Act by President Andrew Jackson in 1830, almost fifty years prior to the creation of this ledger. The author of the Tie Creek ledger drawings would have been distinctly aware of the omnipresent threat of removal posed by the advancement of Euro-American settlers on the western frontier. Like other ledger artists of his day, the author availed himself of the new materials at hand to record the last days of nomadic warrior traditions on the Great Plains.



**ANONYMOUS ARTIST**

Cheyenne, Central Plains

*Ledger Drawing, ca. 1870*

Tie Creek Ledger Book

ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper

7 3/4 x 12 1/2 in (19.7 x 31.8 cm)



**ANONYMOUS ARTIST**

Cheyenne, Central Plains

Ledger Drawing, ca. 1870

Tie Creek Ledger Book

ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper

7 3/4 x 12 1/2 in (19.7 x 31.8 cm)



**ANONYMOUS ARTIST**

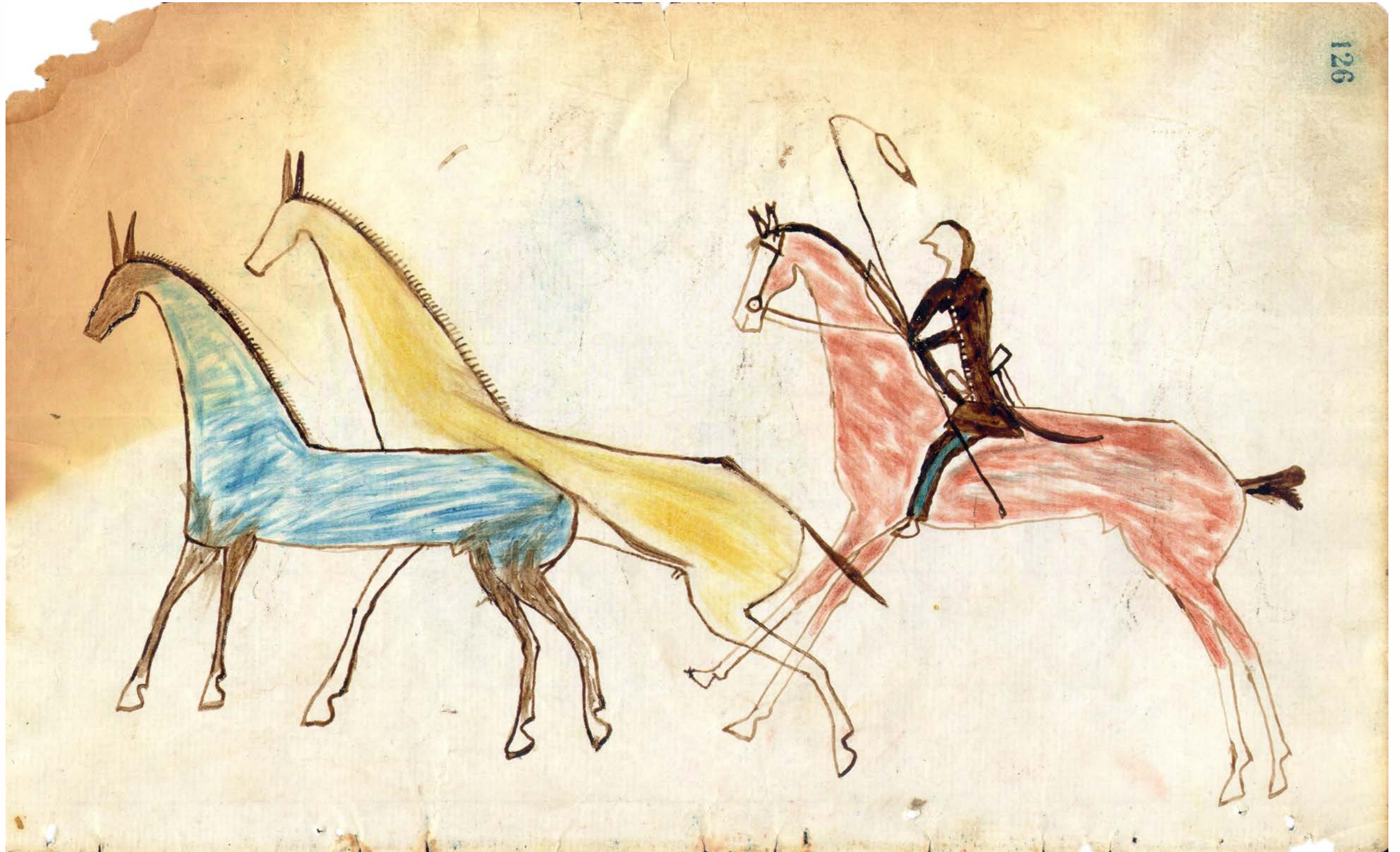
Cheyenne, Central Plains

*Ledger Drawing, ca. 1870*

Tie Creek Ledger Book

ink, graphite and colored pencil on paper

7 3/4 x 12 1/2 in (19.7 x 31.8 cm)



**VINCENT PRICE LEDGER BOOK**  
**ANONYMOUS ARTIST, CA. 1875**  
**CHEYENNE, CENTRAL PLAINS**

The group of drawings from the Vincent Price Ledger Book date back to the earliest pre-reservation phase of Plains Indian Ledger Art. The book was named after the American actor Vincent Price, who acquired this rare collection of eighty-six Ledger Drawings in the early 1950s.

The drawings in the Vincent Price Ledger Book date from about 1875 to 1878, the period immediately following the Indian Wars, and primarily depict the war exploits of Cheyenne warriors during that time of intense conflicts with the U.S. Cavalry.

The name glyphs present in the book tentatively identify known Cheyenne warriors such as Jumping Rabbit, Two Crows, Black Horse, Starving Elk and Ma Nim Ick (Eagle Head), the father of Ho Na Nist To (Howling Wolf), one of the most accomplished ledger artists of the period.





**ANONYMOUS ARTIST**

Cheyenne, Central Plains

*Ledger Drawing*, ca. 1875

Vincent Price Ledger Book

graphite and colored pencil on lined paper

5 1/2 x 11 1/2 in (14 x 29.2 cm)





**ANONYMOUS ARTIST**

Cheyenne, Central Plains

*Ledger Drawing*, ca. 1875

Vincent Price Ledger Book

graphite and colored pencil on lined paper

5 1/2 x 11 1/2 in (14 x 29.2 cm)

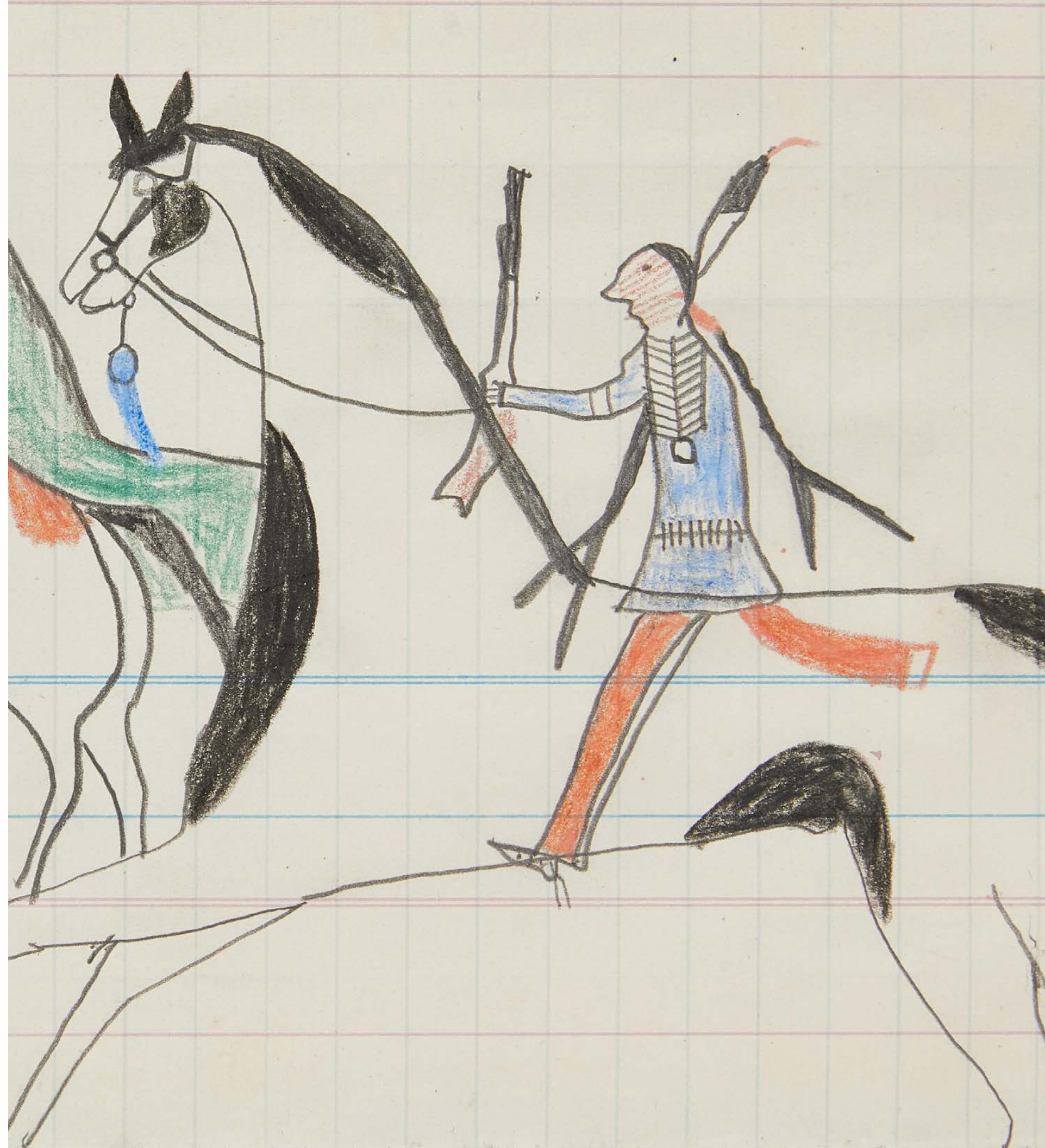
## MACNIDER LEDGER BOOK, CA. 1880

### LAKOTA, NORTHERN PLAINS

The Macnider Ledger Book is a highly important art-historical record created by several Lakota warrior artists at the onset of the reservation period. Produced during a time of tremendous upheaval, these drawings are both a window to life on the open Plains as well as a revealing documentation of the sudden and fundamental changes that occurred from the 1870's onwards.

Each drawing is a vibrant record of past events. Horse tracks suggest direction and speed, while graphic lines radiating from a gun barrel indicate shots fired at the warrior. Here, the highly abstracted imagery seen on earlier pictographic traditions on hide and rock gives way to a more realistic perspective, showing attempts at fore-shortening and three-quarter views.

Costume and personal adornments are rendered with great attention to detail, while the frequent depiction of trade goods, such as colorful blankets, umbrellas and kettles, are a rare feature in early Ledger Art.





**ATTRIBUTED TO CEHUPA (JAW), ALSO KNOWN AS OKICIZE TAWA (HIS FIGHT)** (ca. 1853-1924)

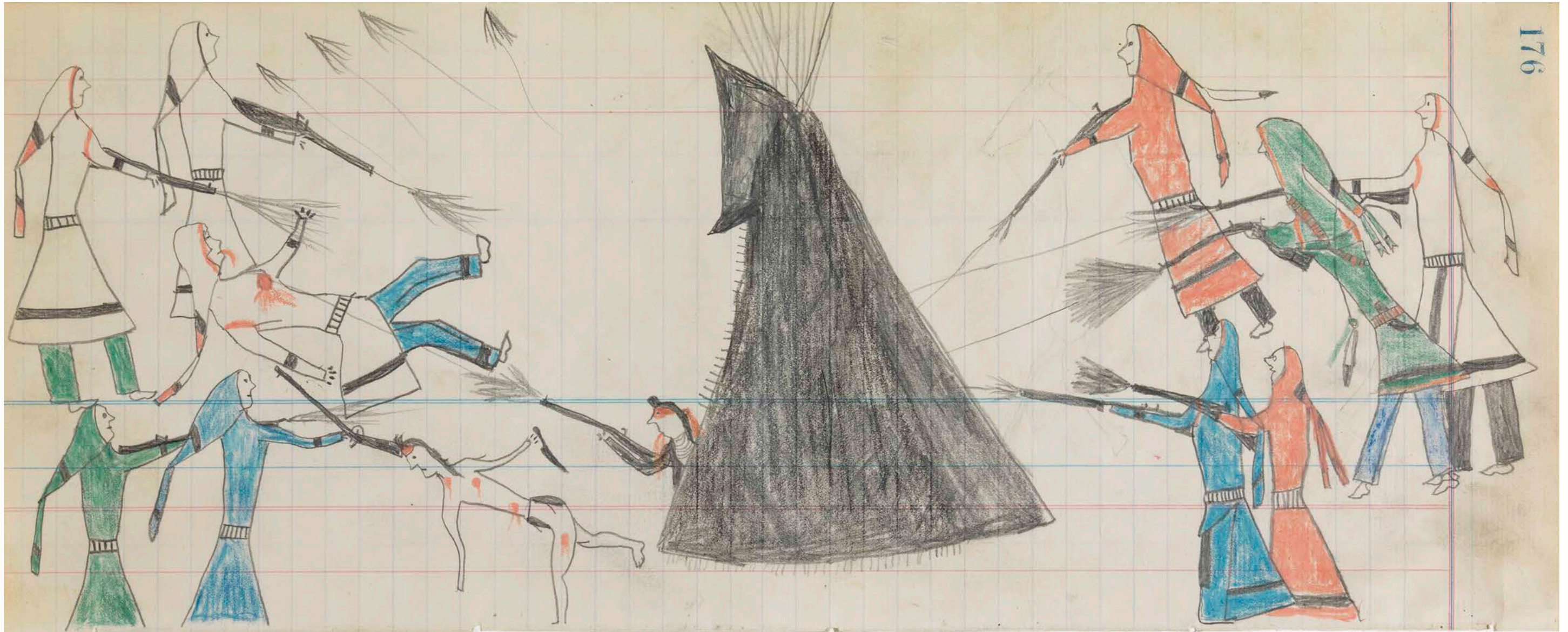
Lakota, Northern Plains

*Ledger Drawing*, ca. 1880

Macnider Ledger Book

graphite and colored pencil on lined paper

5 3/4 x 14 1/2 in (14.6 x 36.8 cm)



**ATTRIBUTED TO CEHUPA (JAW), ALSO KNOWN AS OKICIZE TAWA (HIS FIGHT)** (ca. 1853-1924)

Lakota, Northern Plains

*Ledger Drawing*, ca. 1880

Macnider Ledger Book

graphite and colored pencil on lined paper

5 3/4 x 14 1/2 in (14.6 x 36.8 cm)

## EUGENE STANDING ELK (CA. 1857-1926)

### NORTHERN CHEYENNE, CENTRAL PLAINS

Among the surviving examples of 19th century Plains Ledger Art, the six drawings attributed to Northern Cheyenne warrior artist Eugene Standing Elk (ca. 1857-1926) are remarkable. Few other Ledger Drawings predating the 20th century are rendered predominantly in watercolor and ink. While most Ledger Drawings speak to the martial accomplishments of particular warrior artists - the vast majority depict battle scenes - the Standing Elk drawings picture a male protagonist and his sweetheart in various stages of courting.

Among the Northern Cheyenne, as with other Plains nations, courting was a highly formalized process that could extend over long periods of time. Standing Elk's drawings are likely sequential, recording several meetings between the pair. Both are formally dressed in fine attire, their details rendered with remarkable delicacy. The woman is shown in plaid, checked, and striped trade cloth, with fringes that would sway dynamically with movement; and the man frequently cloaked in a black woolen blanket with a white selvedge of the kind traded amongst Indigenous peoples since the late 18th century. Several images show the couple wrapped in the same blanket, a sign that the courting procedures have concluded.

Among Plains nations, walking together wrapped within a man's blanket was a public expression of a couple's engagement. As in warfare, the warrior has demonstrated perseverance and great skill in his chivalry. The Standing Elk drawings celebrate the virility and social prowess of the male protagonist, likely the artist himself. The drawings capture the courting process with an unusual familiarity and sweetness. Small in format, the focused composition centered entirely around the pair of figures greatly adds to their sense of intimacy.





each:  
**ATTRIBUTED TO EUGENE STANDING ELK**  
(ca. 1857-1926)  
Northern Cheyenne, Central Plains  
*Ledger Drawing*, ca. 1882  
watercolor, ink and graphite on paper  
5 3/4 x 3 1/8 in (14.6 x 7.9 cm)



## GOODWYN LEDGER BOOK, CA. 1880 LAKOTA, WOOD MOUNTAIN, SASKATCHEWAN

The Goodwyn Ledger Book contains the only known and documented series of Ledger Drawings originating from the geographic region of Canada. The handwritten notes on the accounting paper on which the drawings were originally created clearly indicate that the contributing artists resided in the Wood Mountain Uplands in what is now southwestern Saskatchewan in the early 1880s. Crucially, this makes them contemporaneous to the allied Lakota and Cheyenne resistance to American colonial expansion, military violence and the reservation system in the 1860s and 1870s. Led, among others, by Hunkpapa Lakota leader Sitting Bull, approximately 5,000 Lakota people migrated to present-day Saskatchewan following the Battle of the Little Bighorn/Greasy Grass in 1876. The Goodwyn drawings thus manifest acts of war and resistance that implicate Canada and the U.S. in the very moment of their respective formations. In stark contrast to mainstream narratives, however, they capture events from an Indigenous point of view. Uniquely placed at the intersection of art, documentary and storytelling, the importance of the Goodwyn Ledger Book in preserving and recounting the shared histories of the Lakota and Canadian nations cannot be overstated.

The Goodwyn Ledger Drawings illuminate Lakota warrior culture and the importance of the horse, or Shukawakan (Holy Dog) to it. Rooted in longstanding Indigenous pictographic traditions, the majority of drawings depict individual war exploits or acts of valor, such as counting coup on an enemy.

Great attention is paid to details of attire and weaponry, allowing for the identification of particular war societies in which only seasoned and victorious warriors could participate. The quality of the line is superb, each figure rendered in few sweeping motions. Compact in scale, the gesture of the line reflects and enhances the dynamic movement of the subject matter itself. Named after the first non-Indigenous owner W.H. Goodwyn, at least five distinct warrior artists contributed drawings to the book.

Corresponding with Lakota cultural practices, it is likely that one artist drew the other warrior's deeds and honors. As scholar Claire Thomson points out, the oral histories carried by the Goodwyn Ledger would have been related and validated communally, a process known as *waktóglake*. As such, the drawings encapsulate cultural understandings of time, place, community and shared values at a pivotal moment in Lakota history.





**ANONYMOUS ARTIST**

Lakota, Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan

*Ledger Drawing*, ca. 1880

Goodwyn Ledger Book

ink, graphite and colored pencil on lined paper

3 x 5 3/4 in (7.6 x 14.6 cm)





**ANONYMOUS ARTIST**

Lakota, Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan

*Ledger Drawing*, ca. 1880

Goodwyn Ledger Book

ink, graphite and colored pencil on lined paper

3 x 5 3/4 in (7.6 x 14.6 cm)

# PICTORIAL MUSLIN, ANONYMOUS ARTIST, CA. 1890

## HUNKPAPA LAKOTA, NORTHERN PLAINS

ink and colored ink on muslin

35 1/2 x 63 1/2 in (90.2 x 161.3 cm)

Pictographic painted panels on muslin or canvas evolved from an earlier tradition of painted hide tipi liners, an ingenious architectural device attached to the lower interior of a tipi to guide smoke along the inside wall and through the smoke hole at the top. The appearance of painted muslins in the late 19th century coincides with the forced relocation of Native American families and communities into log cabins on reservations. Artists cleverly adopted the earlier pictographic tradition of the tipi liner, utilising newly available materials such as muslin and coloured ink to create large-scale paintings to be fixed around the interior of their cabins. In later years, cloth cabin liners were frequently commissioned or sold to U.S. military personal, anthropologists and tourists.

In contrast to tipi liners, most of which are painted with abstract geometric designs, pictorial muslins frequently depict the exploits of one or a number of protagonists, referencing events recognised as important by the community. As such, pictographic muslins serve as mnemonic devices of personal and collective histories similar to winter counts and Ledger Art. The extraordinary muslin illustrated here is unusual in the sheer number of scenes depicted, each vignette accompanied by handwritten inscriptions in Lakota. According to Christina Burke, curator of Native American art at the Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa, Oklahoma, some of the protagonists can be identified as Mato Luta (Red Bear), Mehaka Ciqala (Little Elk), Mato Nape Ska (White Paw Bear) and Kangi Ohitika (Brave Crow). These men appear on the 1885 ration rolls for the Standing Rock Reservation, strengthening the attribution of this muslin to a Hunkpapa Lakota artist.

The quality of each pictorial element is superb, the figures all confidently rendered. Many scenes capture horse raids and battles with Apsáalooke warriors. The richness of detail is notable, including the careful presentation of protective images such as spirit animals or the celestial constellations on various shields, among the most prized possessions of a Plains warrior in the 19th century. Similarly noteworthy is the variety of body poses, ranging from warriors charging at enemies to those ducking away or spread on the ground in defeat. This muslin was clearly painted by a high-ranking artist, capturing the exploits of many of his peers with exceptional virtuosity.









**ANONYMOUS ARTIST, CA. 1870**

**CHEYENNE, CENTRAL PLAINS**

*Ledger Drawing, ca. 1870*

ink and colored pencil on paper

6 x 4 7/8 in (15.2 x 12.4 cm)





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