

# THE SMITHSONIAN COLLECTION

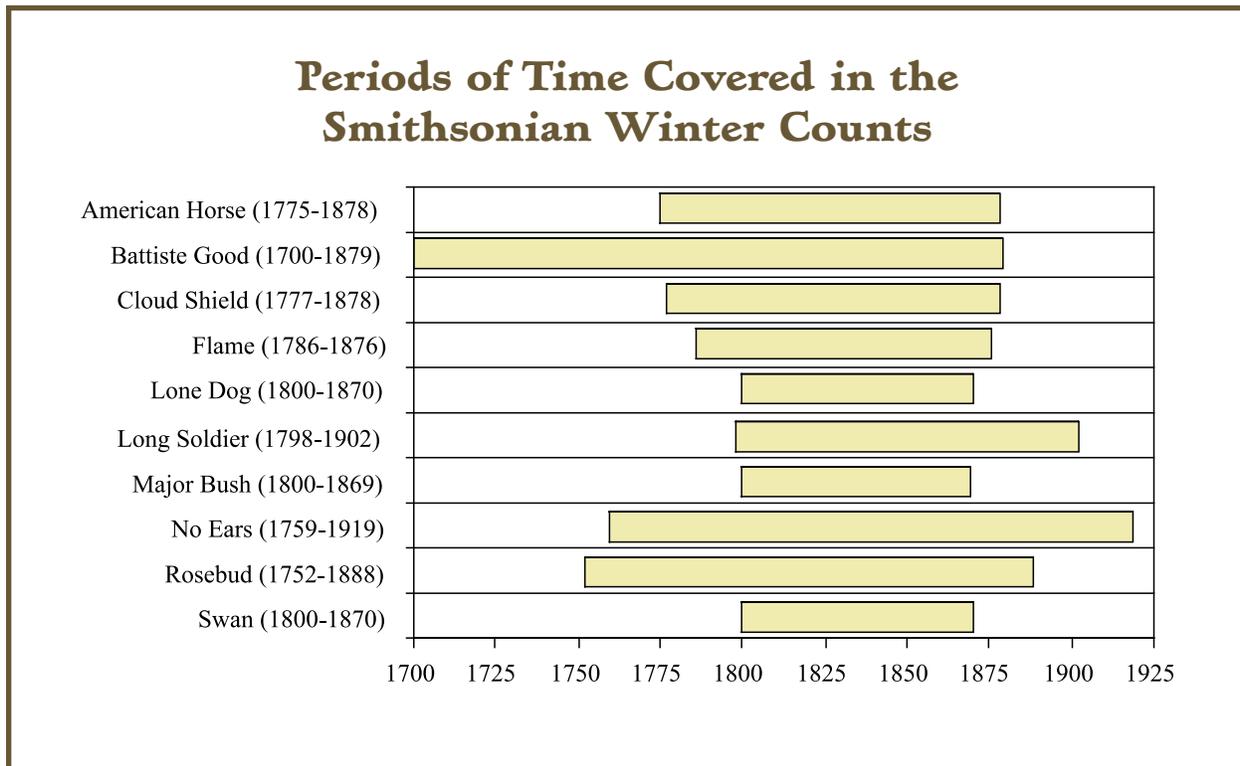
The Lakota winter count online exhibit highlights ten Lakota winter counts in the collections of the National Anthropological Archives, a part of the National Museum of Natural History, and the National Museum of the American Indian. These counts are named after their keepers, the person who collected them, or a place. They cover periods of time spanning from 1700 to 1919, and are known as:

American Horse (keeper)  
Battiste Good (keeper)  
Cloud Shield (keeper)  
The Flame (keeper)  
Lone Dog (keeper)

Long Soldier (keeper)  
Major Bush (collector)  
No Ears (keeper)  
Rosebud (location)  
The Swan (keeper)

## Traditions

Over 170 Lakota winter counts are known, but many of them are exact replicas of each other. Many others are closely related versions representing the same **tradition**; they cover similar spans of time and share common event references. Lone Dog, The Flame, The Swan, Long Soldier and the Major Bush winter counts were all collected from *tiospayes* of northern Lakotas who lived close to each other and interacted on a regular basis. American Horse, Battiste Good, Cloud Shield, No Ears and Rosebud are all from the southern Lakota bands.



## Collectors

Two individuals were responsible for acquiring many of the Smithsonian's winter counts. Col. Garrick Mallery collected materials on nine of the thirteen winter counts housed at the National Anthropological Archives. Using research gathered by other Army officers, Mallery published much of his material on the winter counts in the *Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (1886). The National Museum of the American Indian's collection is a result of the collecting efforts of the museum's founder, George Gustav Heye.

## Collecting

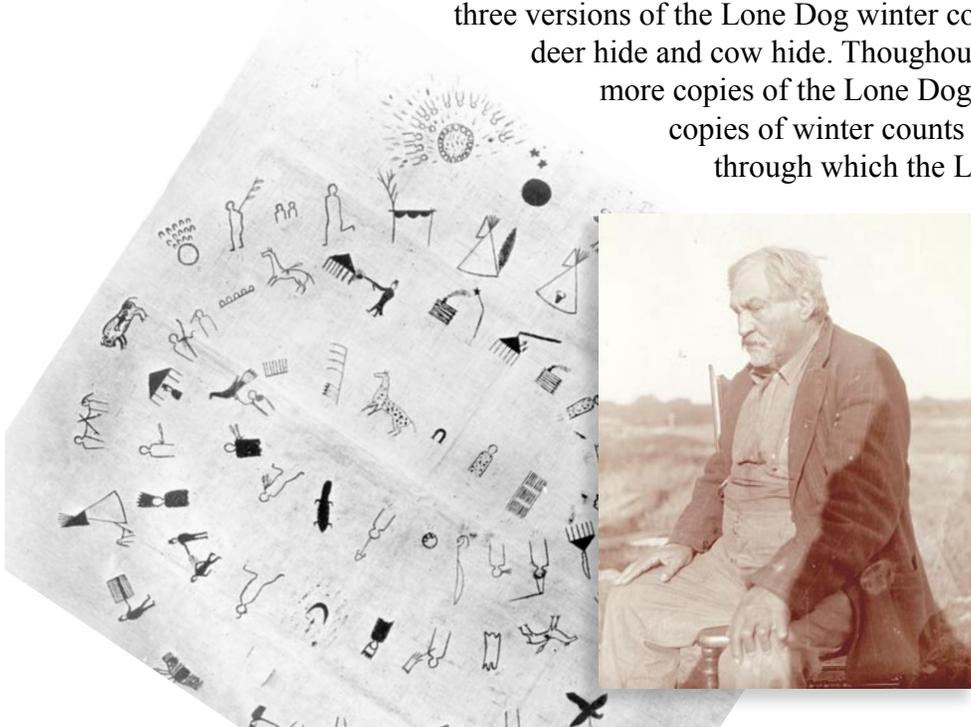
The value of the winter counts is not based only on their authenticity as artifacts created and used by the Lakota people. Rather, it lies in their value as a tangible representation of a rich oral history handed down from generation to generation and inherent in the cultural identity of a closely-knit community.

It is important to note that most of the winter counts housed in the Smithsonian's collections are not the originals used in the community, but copies made for the collectors. In truth, all winter counts are copies of a previous version as no one lived long enough to have recorded a whole count. As described earlier, when the role of the keeper was handed down to an apprentice, the apprentice's first task was to copy his predecessor's count. Winter counts were also copied when non-Indian collectors commissioned keepers to duplicate their winter counts and provide explanations of its entries. In instances such as this, interpreters were critical links between the Lakota-speaking keepers and the collectors who sought to record the winter count's history in English.

Winter counts were copied into drawing books (American Horse, Cloud Shield, Battiste Good), and traced onto linen (The Swan) or muslin (The Flame). NMAI actually holds three versions of the Lone Dog winter count, copied onto buffalo hide, deer hide and cow hide. Throughout the world there are at least ten more copies of the Lone Dog count, indicating that creating copies of winter counts for sale was a **cottage industry** through which the Lakota presented themselves and their history to others.



Col. Garrick Mallery, U.S. Army, author of "Pictographs of the North American Indians," Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology.



**Far left:** This copy of the Lone Dog winter count, drawn on muslin, formed the basis for Mallery's study. **Left:** The interpreter, Basil Clement was a valuable resource to scholars studying the Lone Dog winter count.