

Louisville Ky. Sept. 11, 1923.
Deer Park, 1970

Dear Professor:

The P. S. on the outside of your letter of Sept. 6, is good news though the publisher has not written me but his letter may be on the way. I have finished one of the large illustrations, namely Ironshirt leading the charge of a large warparty of mounted Indians. I think it will be a very effective composition and is now on exhibition at the Ky. State Fair. So far I have only drawn it in leadpencil and shall do it in washdrawing as soon as I find time.

Your description of the old tipi in Oklahoma City is very interesting. If I had time and money I would repair thither at once and study it and make a natural size facsimile copy, minus the dirt. It could then be photographed (which seems to be not possible with the original, according to your description) or more copies could then easily be made and used to make the specimen accessible to various parties who might get further information on the same. Such parties might be: Doctor Clark Wissler, of the Am. Mus. of Nat. Hist. in New York who would doubtless be much interested and knows people on various reservations who could trace Indians who might know something about the specimen.

Years ago I saw in Philadelphia a photograph of a tipi covered with drawings which covered the specimen in a spiral arrangement. It was made by the Sioux on canvas, belonged to a white man at the time and was said to represent a "wintercount".

Since the ordinary pictographs of that kind on robes and lodges are of an autobiographical nature, it is likely that the specimen you describe is of an historical nature which would be the perfectly logical next step of "secular" (demotic) pictography as distinguished from the "sacred" (hieratic) pictography which is so well represented by the Berlin tipi, to which you refer. A step which several plainstribes have actually taken in the so-called wintercounts. Years ago I saw a Sioux tipi made of canvas which was also covered with representations of war scenes pretty much in the same manner as you describe it of the Oklahoma specimen. It lacked the pipes but had four quilled disks on four sides of the cover.

The fact that your specimen evidently had the drawings on the inside seems to indicate that the lodge had ^{also} some ceremonial character or significance, perhaps a record of warlike exploits of a group or tribe. It may have been used to "count coup" by some warrior society, a ceremony which I once witnessed among the Ogalala. In that ceremony every member stuck a decorated, slender stick in the ground before him and then recited for every stick some "coup" he had counted. On that occasion the old warriors sat in a circle in a lodge. In a private collection I saw years ago a huge lodge curtain consisting of about 15 to 20 feet of cotton about 60" wide covered with perhaps more than a hundred carefully made drawings of war scenes. When this curtain was hung in the lodge it could be used just like the drawings on your specimen to illustrate an recital of wardeeds and perhaps other events that were of tribal interest. All this is very interesting and important as evidence of the rising need among our plains tribes for more precise records than mere oral tradition, a need that led at various centers in the old and new world to pictography and finally to a system of writing. Since this invention is the most important of all, and