

circled around the entire edge of flattened horn, and then moved round and round (clockwise) until you got close to the inside. These are some of the years I recorded: The year that I was born, Four Horns was killed; I was told this. So I marked that for the first event of my calendar. A priest, whose name was Father de Smet, came to Powder River to make peace with the Sioux — he and three other men (May, 1868).— It was the first time I saw him.— I marked that. (43) For an entire day at one time the sun was eclipsed; so I marked it. Jumping Bull, Sitting Bull's father, was killed by the Crow; so that was another event. A Crow man, two Crow women, and one of their sons were captured by the Sioux and held captive; they were in a cage-like thing built of brush. Sitting Bull took them out of this and sent them home, I marked that. Another year the Sioux captured a White woman and held her captive. Sitting Bull also freed her and sent her home. So I also marked that: And so on. Well, then if a man wanted to speak of a certain event, say for instance of the death of his father — his father being only an ordinary man — he'd say, "My father passed away the year of the great eclipse."

I knew our sign language, as well as that of the Rees (Arikaras) and the Crow when I was twenty-five year old. (44) Nobody taught them to me like we teach children today. If we wanted to communicate with other tribes, there was nothing to do but to learn their sign language unless we wanted to learn their spoken language which would have taken a long time. Most of the signs in sign language were identical. I learned the different signs by becoming acquainted with the different tribes.

(43) See Chittendon, Hiram Martin, and Richardson, Alfred Talbot, Life, letters and travels of Father Pierre-Jean de Smet, S. J., 1801-1873, 3:899-922 for full account by Father de Smet of his transactions with the Sioux on the Powder River as U. S. Representative in June 1868.

(44) Variations in the sign languages of the North American Indians are discussed and illustrated by Garrick Mallery, in Sign language among North American Indians, p. 263-552.
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