

Interpreting Sitting Bull's Robe with Elder Wayne Goodwill

9:25

ONSCREEN TEXT: Interpreting Sitting Bull's Robe with Wayne Goodwill.

WAYNE GOODWILL: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Wayne Goodwill. I'm

from the Standing Buffalo First Nation, Dakota, and I'm here today to talk about the Sitting Bull hide paint. He wrote some, drew some very important pictures of the day, and he tells a story as he prayed...

What I looked at, he prayed to the Great Spirit that he wants to see these animals return to the country. And if you view the hide

painting, he drew a picture of himself with the war bonnet. And he

always had a horned war bonnet, so he's got horns on. And he drew

a number of animals around, which was antelope, deer, mule deer,

white-tailed deer, elk, and himself hunting buffalos. And he drew two

birds. One was a golden eagle with a peace pipe, was a messenger,

and the other one was a blue jay, who was also a messenger that had

a peace pipe. And he drew two peace pipes on each side of his art,

and he circled the star with eagle feathers. And in the middle was pictures of land. And, of course, the people call it a black hole today, was where we enter when we go to our new world. When we pass on, we go up to handle of the Big Dipper, which is called a Red Road. (speaks Lakota). So we go on that, and we enter into the Big Dipper, and we go to our final grounds from the final destination. And today, everybody talks about "Star People." Well, that's what we call ourselves. (speaks Lakota). (speaks Lakota) is star. (speaks Lakota) is, we're Falling-Star People. We come from the sky. Old history says that we were from the sky. Everything that comes from the sky was from our... In First Nations names, my name is (speaks Lakota). I got a name from a real warrior. His name was Tom Whiteman, and he fought alongside of Louis Riel. And there he'd... Louis Riel offered First Nation people land and a number of things if they support him, so he went in supported him. But he said they were running out of ammunition, so he took off his war bonnet and gave it to a young boy to carry on. So when I was born, my mother asked him to give me an Indian name, First Nation name, so what he did was he told his story to the people and then he said, "I took off my war bonnet, and I gave

it to this young boy, so I'm going to call Wayne (speaks Lakota)."

Gives away the war bonnet, he said, so I have that name. Chief Sitting Bull was appointed chief from all amongst the other chiefs, Chief Black Bull, chief Four Horn, chief Black Moon. He knew how to talk a bit of English, so he was the main spokesman when he dealt with Welsh to try to get a reserve or a place for them. In my understanding of the history, MacDonald didn't want to give Sitting Bull a reserve because he already got Treaty Four in [1874] and this battle took place in [1876]. And then they came to Canada and asked for a reserve, it was already all surrendered to the government. Sitting Bull gave up staying in Canada, and he left Black Moon. Prior to that, there was other chiefs. He left them in Moose Jaw and went back to the United States, figuring they'll just let him go. But once they put him on that on the riverboat, he had to surrender his horses and his gun. And they moved him down to Fort Yates, and from there, they shipped him to Fort Randall, and he served two years there. They broke him there. They broke his spirit, just like what they'd done to residential school children. They break their spirits. And then after that, a lot of them commit suicide, and all this kind of

stuff that goes on, because they forgot how to live as normal people. He could have drawn this in 1878, '79, '80, somewhere in there when he was doing the Sun Dances in South Saskatchewan here. I went to where he did his last Sun Dance, and it's about 25 miles west of Wood Mountain. And that's where they had their last Sun Dance. And he was a very holy man. And he prayed, and a lot of people depended on him. So, I think he prayed using this prayer robe, asking the creator to help him, to help his people in preserving life, whether it was Canada or United States. He knew that there was depletion of animals, there was getting to be no more buffalo, so he prayed that the creator will see, on this robe, that he wanted to buffalo hunt. He wanted the moose, the elk, the deer, the mule deer, the antelopes, he drew all around. He wanted them preserved. And he drew that centre starburst design. And today, I see, when we dance, the fancy feather dancers and the bustles they use is round. Yeah, one day, Sitting Bull and his tribe were at the trading post. Lagere, I think was his name. And he said, "We need some food and we don't have very much to trade." Well, he said, he looked around and he said, "You see that hawk flying there?" And they looked at that. He told the old

chief, he said, "You can kill that hawk without a bullet, I'll give you all the food you want." They told his other leaders, he said, "They want me to kill that bird without any shells or gun." So they agreed with him, so he looked over there and he point at it. Here it just fell out of the sky and fell down. So that old man Lagere looked at him. "Well, bring it here then," he said. So he ran, the boy ran over there and picked it up, brought it back. He brought it back and he showed Lagere, "Look." But when he showed him, there was maggots all over his belly. He said, "That's not the right hawk." He said, "You found that dead there." So he took it, he closed the wings up like this, and he was singing, sang a little song, and he threw it up like that, and it flew away. "There," he said. "So, you'll give me food?" "Yeah, I'll give you food," he said. So he went and I guess that's how they got food.

ONSCREEN TEXT: Sitting Bull robe from the collection of the State Historical Society of North Dakota.

State Historical Society of North Dakota

Tatanka Iyotake (Sitting Bull), Hunkpapa, Lakota, 1831-1890

Buffalo robe, circa 1877-1881, pigment on American bison hide

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