

# Imprisoned Art, Complex Patronage



**Figure 4.**  
*"The young men, Prisoners, taken to  
Florida," Saint Augustine, Florida,  
1875. Yale Collection of Western  
Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and  
Manuscript Library, 1004474.*

## The Southern Plains Wars, Fort Marion, and Representational Art

Drawings by Zotom and Howling Wolf, the one a Kiowa Indian and the other a Southern Cheyenne, are histories of a place and time of creation—Fort Marion, Florida, in the 1870s. These two men were among seventy-two Southern Plains Indian warriors and chiefs selected for incarceration at Fort Marion, in Saint Augustine, at the end of the Southern Plains wars. Among the Cheyenne prisoners was a woman who had fought as a warrior; the wife and young daughter of one of the Comanche men also went to Florida, but not as prisoners. During their three years in exile, Zotom, Howling Wolf, and many of the other younger men made pictures narrating incidents of life on the Great Plains, their journey to Florida, and life at Fort Marion.

The drawings explored in this book also have a history subsequent to their creation, a history connected to the patron of the drawings and her ownership of them. Other audiences who have seen and studied Zotom's and Howling Wolf's drawings are part of the works' continuing histories, too. Plains Indian drawings and paintings, including works created by men imprisoned at Fort Marion, were visual narratives, intended to tell stories. Those stories still live, for history is, simply put, composed of stories about the past. As long as drawings such as these from Fort Marion exist, they will continue to tell their stories.

For the people exiled to Florida, incarceration was only the latest of many difficulties they had faced. Increasingly throughout the 1860s and 1870s, tension filled the Great Plains. Encounters between Native and non-Native people and among Native peoples themselves brought troops of the United States Army to the region in large numbers. Forts were established at strategic places, and the army worked to maintain peace. Its main concern, however, was the safety of the growing number of non-Native settlers moving into and across the plains. Native peoples of both the northern and southern plains fought to protect themselves and to retain their land and way of life.

One of the most horrific events of the decades before the Fort Marion confinement was the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864, in which Colorado volunteer militia under the command of Colonel John M. Chivington attacked the village of the Cheyenne chief Black Kettle, even though the chief flew a United States flag over his lodge. The militia mutilated the bodies of men, women, and children and paraded through downtown Denver waving spoils of their attack for all to see. Such devastation required revenge. Even chiefs who had previously followed Black Kettle's peaceful ways now turned their attention to war. The younger warriors, eager to prove their bravery, readily joined forces.

Other fights broke out between the Kiowas and their enemies, most important among them the Utes. Sometimes Ute and Apache warriors served as scouts for the US Army, as was the case during an attack on some Kiowas led by Kit Carson in November 1864, about the time of the Sand Creek Massacre. Referred to by Kiowas as the battle of Red Bluffs, a reference to the fight's location in the Texas Panhandle, and by non-Native sources as the first battle of Adobe Walls, after the ruins of a nearby trading post, the encounter was a victory for the Kiowa forces that is recorded in Kiowa historical accounts, or calendars.<sup>1</sup>

In November 1868, just four years after Sand Creek, the Cheyenne chief Black Kettle was attacked again when George Armstrong Custer led his forces against him at the battle of Washita. Black Kettle and his wife, as well as the Arapaho chief Little Robe, were among the many casualties at Washita, despite the fact that Black Kettle again flew a US flag over his tipi, along with a white flag of peace. Some Kiowas had been in Black Kettle's village, and they, too, felt the outrage. This event was so significant that some Kiowa calendars recorded Black Kettle's death even though he was a Cheyenne chief, not a Kiowa.<sup>2</sup> Again, retaliation followed. Sand Creek and Washita were major factors in the escalation of war on the southern plains.

Numerous treaties between the United States and Plains Indian tribes were signed throughout the 1850s, 1860s, and first half of the 1870s, but most of them failed. One of the most famous was the Medicine Lodge Treaty of 1868, as the Cheyenne people referred to it, or the Treaty of Timber Hill Creek, as it was known to the Kiowas.<sup>3</sup> Various Southern Plains peoples were involved in the negotiations for the treaty. Among its provisions were promises that the US government would make annuity payments to the Kiowa, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Comanche, and Plains Apache people if they ceded their land and accepted smaller reservations. The majority of the southern Great Plains would then be open to the development of railroads and to increased non-Native settlement. The Native signers were to retain hunting rights to at least part of the ceded land, and whiskey peddlers were to be kept off the reservations. The Southern Plains people were also to remain at peace. Annual payments of goods did not come, however, and the whiskey peddlers did not stop their activities. When the Southern Plains people attempted to hunt outside the official reservations established for them, battles ensued.

Similar problems arose on the northern plains, but during the mid-1870s it was the southern plains, predominantly present-day Colorado, Oklahoma, and northern Texas, that became particular battlegrounds. The Red River war raged from 1874 to mid-1875. Its name comes from the Red River in the Texas Panhandle, the general location of its major battles, but another name for the conflict, the Buffalo war, may be more apt. Non-Native hunters had already slaughtered hundreds of thousands of buffalo on the northern plains, shipping the hides east, and by 1873 they had turned their attention to the region south of the Arkansas River. This was territory to which the Medicine Lodge Treaty had guaranteed hunting rights to the Southern Plains peoples as long as buffalo ranged there. With the large-scale hunting of buffalo by Euroamericans, both hunting rights and the buffalo themselves were in danger of being lost.

The army did nothing to uphold the treaty's promises. Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, and Comanche people joined forces to prevent the loss of the animal that was their main source of food and the source of much else in their lives, both physically and ritually. Non-Native hunters fueled anger in both the north and the south, and warriors attacked them in war parties small and large. Among the casualties on the Kiowa side during one such skirmish in 1874 was Chief Lone Wolf's son, who died during a raid in Texas.<sup>4</sup>

The Buffalo war began in earnest with the battle of Adobe Walls in Texas in late June 1874, when approximately two hundred Indians led by the Comanche chief Quannah Parker, with supposedly bullet-proof protection provided by the Comanche spiritual leader Isatai, attacked a much smaller group of buffalo hunters at the trading post known as Adobe Walls. Despite the odds in their favor, the Native forces were badly beaten by the twenty-eight men and one woman inside the post.<sup>5</sup>

Following Adobe Walls, the army mounted a full-scale war against the Southern Plains peoples. The plan "called for enrollment and protection of innocent and friendly Indians at their reservations and pursuit and destruction of hostile Indians without regard for reservation or departmental boundaries."<sup>6</sup> Other encounters of the war included a September 1874 attack by Kiowas and Comanches on a wagon train escorted by Captain Wyllis Lyman on its way to meet Colonel Nelson Miles with supplies. The Indians fired on the teamsters and their army support and finally laid siege to them. The battle lasted several days and left two teamsters and thirteen or more Kiowa and Comanche warriors dead.<sup>7</sup>

The battle of Palo Duro Canyon in the Texas Panhandle, also in September 1874, is often seen as the turning point of the Red River war. While under the command of Colonel Ranald S. MacKenzie, the army was attacked by a Native force estimated at 250 warriors, who attempted unsuccessfully to stampede the cavalry's horses. Early the next morning, the army came across a sleeping village of Comanche, Kiowa, and Cheyenne warriors on the canyon floor. Mamanti, or Owl Prophet, led the Kiowa forces, again under a promise of bullet-proof protection.<sup>8</sup> Loss of life was not extensive at Palo Duro Canyon, but loss of Indian property was. Mackenzie's forces burned the village and stole nearly fifteen hundred horses. The soldiers kept some of them but killed more than a thousand.<sup>9</sup>



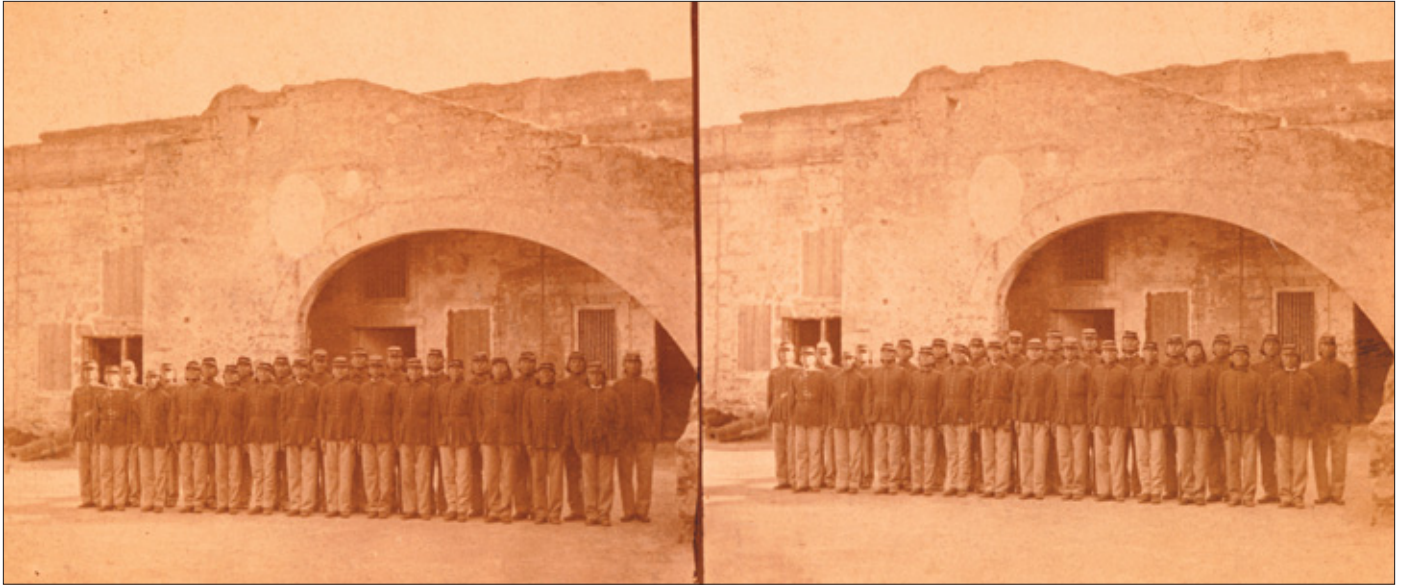


**Figure 5.**  
*Richard Henry Pratt. Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, 3728657.*

The end of the Red River war brought military and government leaders to the decision to send some of the so-called worst offenders in the recent battles to a distant prison. The chiefs and warriors who were actually imprisoned, however, were not necessarily the ringleaders the government sought to incarcerate. Some of the Kiowa war leaders negotiated to remain free, at least one of them by instructing his entire band of Kiowas to surrender at Fort Sill, Indian Territory.<sup>10</sup> The commander at the fort where the Cheyenne and Arapaho people surrendered was drunk at the time he selected the prisoners for exile.<sup>11</sup>

Saint Augustine, Florida, the site of the sixteenth-century Spanish Castillo de San Marcos—by the nineteenth century called Fort Marion—was selected as the prison location because it housed a readily available fortification far distant from the warriors' homeland. By exiling leaders and active warriors so far from their homes and families, government officials hoped to remove them from contact with the rest of their communities and thus promote more peaceful adjustments to the enforced reservation system.<sup>12</sup> No length of internment was set in advance. The officials who conceived of the hostage plan could have had no premonition of what the Florida period would be like for the seventy-one men and one woman sent into exile.

Richard Henry Pratt (1840–1926), who would later found Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, was in charge of the prisoners at Fort Marion.<sup>13</sup> A volunteer who



**Figure 6.**

*"Kiowa, Comanche, and Caddoe Indians, confined in Fort Marion, St. Augustine, Florida." Stereograph, about 1875. O. Pierre Havens, photographer. Photographic Study Collection, National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 2005.043.2.*



**Figure 7.**

*"Indian Guard, Confined in Fort Marion, St. Augustine, Florida." Stereograph, about 1875. O. Pierre Havens, photographer. National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 2003.161.*



**Figure 8.**  
“First Students at Carlisle, 1879.”  
J. N. Choate, photographer. Courtesy  
Cumberland County Historical  
Society, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

had served in the Union Army during the Civil War, Pratt was mustered out after the war but returned to the army two years later. He began serving on the Great Plains in early 1867, at first as an officer in the Tenth Cavalry, a unit of white officers and black soldiers who were known as the Buffalo Soldiers. Subsequently, Pratt worked with Native scouts from various tribes during the Plains Indian wars. Because of his experience with Native men from different cultures, Pratt was placed in charge of the Fort Marion inmates.

Pratt was with the chiefs and warriors as they were assembled at Fort Sill for their journey to Florida. Initially chained in wagons, the prisoners traveled to Caddo, Indian Territory, where they boarded a train that would take them to Fort Leavenworth, in present-day Kansas. They subsequently passed through cities including Saint Louis, Indianapolis, Nashville, and Macon. Not only the train itself but also the cities and the large crowds that gathered to see the prisoners as they traveled greatly affected the Indians. Pratt recorded that only one man, the Kiowa chief Lone Wolf, had ever been on a train before, and the speed of the train was terrifying to the prisoners.<sup>14</sup>

During the journey, the Kiowa chief Lean Bear attempted suicide by stabbing himself multiple times. He was left in Nashville until he recovered enough to be taken to Saint Augustine, but he ultimately died at Fort Marion because, according to Pratt, he refused to eat.<sup>15</sup> Another chief, the Cheyenne Grey Beard, tried to escape as the train approached the border between Georgia and Florida. When he failed to stop, guards shot him. As he lay dying, the chief was surrounded by Cheyenne men. Pratt wrote that “among other things, Grey Beard said he had wanted to die ever since being chained and



taken from home. He told Manimic [Eagle Head, another Cheyenne chief] what to tell his wife and daughter and soon died."<sup>16</sup>

Oheltoint, or Charley Buffalo, a Kiowa prisoner, later recalled both events in his account of the trip to Saint Augustine:

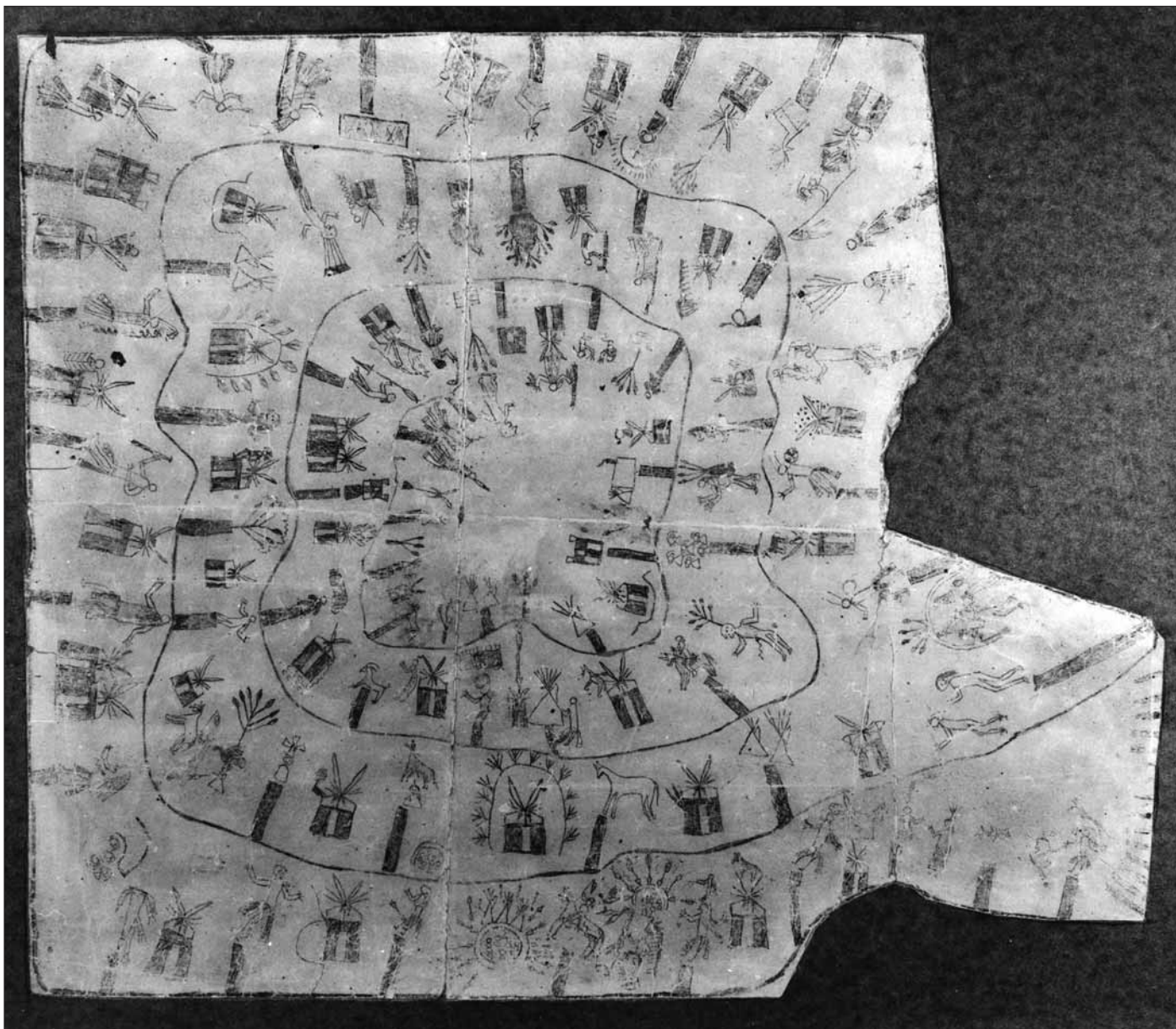
*That evening the train started again, and we left Bear Hungry [Lean Bear] behind. I was worried that night on the train until the interpreter, George Fox, said we would return home someday; after that I felt better. The train stopped again a short while later. A Cheyenne chief [Grey Beard] jumped from a train window and some soldiers shot at him. Lieutenant Pratt hollered, "There he is! Don't shoot!" But he was already dead.*<sup>17</sup>

Arriving in Florida, the remaining prisoners were transferred to a steamboat, which took them from Jacksonville to Toci, and then back to a final train to Saint Augustine. Wagons carried them to the fort. Oheltoint recalled, "We left the train and got on a boat. . . . When we finally reached Fort Marion, we saw a big house with no top and the ocean. We wanted to make tipis and camp by the ocean, but Lieutenant Pratt said that tipis were in our past. He was a good man, anyway, and we liked him. Lieutenant Pratt stayed at Fort Marion with us."<sup>18</sup>

Richard Pratt was a complex person who is often written about as the villain in the story of Native education. In charge of the Fort Marion prisoners, he required them to adhere to military procedures, including marching, exercising, and participating in daily inspections. Although the prisoners were able to maintain some customs from their own cultures on the plains, Pratt had the men's hair shorn and had them dress in military uniforms. Because of the men's fears of the military, arising from their past experiences on battlefields and from the death of Grey Beard during the journey, Pratt had the strong army presence removed from the fort as soon as possible. The men began to police themselves. They formed their own guard unit, complete with buglers, one of whom was Zotom. Making Medicine, a Southern Cheyenne prisoner, was made sergeant of the guard.<sup>19</sup>

Pratt recognized the mood of the prisoners, who had been taken so far from their homes and families and now found themselves in a strange place where water seemed endless and the environment absolutely foreign.<sup>20</sup> He soon sought ways for the men to be as active as possible in their enforced exile. He also wanted to demonstrate to his superiors the men's work ethic, part of which was their ability to earn money. Men worked in local industries and interacted with visitors to Saint Augustine and Fort Marion. Some of the younger men began learning to read and write English; women from Saint Augustine and long-term visitors to the city volunteered as teachers.

Fort Marion faced Anastasia Island, and Pratt took the prisoners there and to nearby Matanzas Inlet from time to time during their captivity, for the day and to camp.<sup>21</sup> Such outings gave them not only new experiences but also the sense of a life at least marginally closer to that from which they had come. Although they slept in army wall tents rather



**Figure 9.**  
*Kiowa calendar, 1892. Pencil on paper. Courtesy Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, University of California–Berkeley, 2-4933.*

than tipis, the open air was, Pratt felt, a healthier environment than that of the fort. There, the prisoners' quarters consisted of the dank cells of the interior, lower level of the old structure and some additional space constructed on the ramparts.<sup>22</sup>

The imprisonment lasted for three years, during which time several more men died.<sup>23</sup> When the prisoners were released from Fort Marion in mid-1878, Pratt traveled with them to Hampton Institute, in Hampton, Virginia, a school that had been established for freed black slaves following the Civil War. Seventeen of the former prisoners, who

wanted to stay in the East for further education, remained at Hampton.<sup>24</sup> Pratt lobbied for a separate school for Native students and achieved his goal when Carlisle Indian School opened in Pennsylvania in 1879. Ten of the former Fort Marion prisoners entered Carlisle.

There, Pratt followed many of the same practices he had instituted in Saint Augustine, but the curriculum was more formal, including both academic and industrial education. This was to be the procedure for off-reservation boarding schools into the early years of the twentieth century. For the most part, students were not to focus on their homes or cultural practices but were to work toward full assimilation. Pratt wanted all Native people to become US citizens, and he felt that assimilation was the best means of achieving this goal.<sup>25</sup> Not until the early years of the twentieth century did a newly appointed US commissioner of Indian affairs, Francis E. Leupp, officially recognize the failure of this kind of system and reinstitute a focus that included Native arts.<sup>26</sup> Pratt was vehemently opposed to these changes and resigned over the altered direction of the curriculum at Carlisle.<sup>27</sup> He continued to lobby against what he felt were negative practices—those diametrically opposed to the assimilationist policy he wholeheartedly endorsed.<sup>28</sup>

Initially, students at Hampton and Carlisle did make drawings, some closely resembling those created at Fort Marion.<sup>29</sup> At Hampton, drawings were sent to people who gave donations to the school. Pratt apparently did not encourage drawing at Carlisle in the same way he had in Florida. He had wanted to get the Fort Marion prisoners “out of the curio class” in Florida, meaning that he knew the public saw the inmates themselves as curios. Yet, early during the Indians’ confinement, Pratt encouraged the creation of tourist spectacles in Florida by staging dances and a “buffalo” hunt—with a steer as the buffalo—in which the men participated.<sup>30</sup> He also encouraged the prisoners to produce curios: they polished sea beans, made bows and arrows, and drew pictures for sale. The two Southern Plains women and perhaps the young girl at Fort Marion also “worked over old bead moccasins, and freshened them up with new soles and buckskin linings, all of which were bartered to visitors.”<sup>31</sup>

Pratt undoubtedly viewed the drawings as more important than the other objects the prisoners created. He sent books of drawings to people, including his own commanding officer and various humanitarians of the day. Nonetheless, the drawings were for sale and so were readily incorporated into his larger goals for the Fort Marion years. Saint Augustine was a tourist destination, and the drawings allowed the men to be active and to make money. The art supplies Pratt provided gave the prisoners something creative to do.

Carlisle Indian School was a more serious educational undertaking, and Pratt believed that the students needed to focus on work that would assist them in being productive when they returned to their reservations. Although representational images do exist from Pratt’s tenure at Carlisle, drawings like those made in Florida were not a long-term part of this productivity. At Carlisle, Pratt required the students to concentrate on education





**Figure 10.**

*Back view of a Cheyenne man's shirt painted with battle images, about 1860. Left: A warrior uses what is probably a lance wrapped in otter skin to attack a woman wearing a long dress. Right: A warrior carries the protective power of a shield and uses a lance to touch a Pawnee man, identifiable by his flared-cuff moccasins and hairstyle. At top are (left) eleven pipes indicating war parties the warrior-artist has led and (right) ten partial figures indicating enemies he has defeated in battle. Courtesy National Museum of the American Indian Photo Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Suitland, Maryland, T088034.*

that he believed would benefit them in the future, with industrial vocational training a major goal. This kind of education had been unavailable in the Florida prison, but it could be had in a Bureau of Indian Affairs–sponsored boarding school. With a change in administration, art for sale was encouraged at Carlisle, and Pratt detested the practice.<sup>32</sup>

The case had been different in Saint Augustine. Many of the prisoners, though not all of them, created drawings with art supplies that Pratt provided.<sup>33</sup> These drawings helped the men understand their new life, the unfamiliar places through which they had traveled, and the place in which they now found themselves, while enabling them to visually express memories of the lives on the plains from which they had been separated. The men then sold some of the drawing books to visitors to the fort for a dollar or two; many of the men sent money home to their families on the reservations.<sup>34</sup> Some men also sent drawings to their families in Indian Territory, undoubtedly to relay visually some information about the lives they were experiencing so far from home.



## Early Studies of Plains Indian Drawing and Painting

The forty years that have passed since the first publication of the Fort Marion drawing books in the collections of the Southwest Museum have seen a profusion of Plains Indian drawings on paper come to light, including a multitude from Saint Augustine. Academic study and the exhibition of these nineteenth-century drawings and paintings have increased dramatically, with the greatest attention having been paid to drawings from the three-year Fort Marion period. When Dorothy Dunn wrote her essay for the initial publication of Eva Scott Fényes's two books, the majority of information concerning Plains drawings was anthropological, concentrating intently on the picture-writing aspects of such images. A brief review of some of the significant publications Dunn had as her references underscores her contribution and makes subsequent changes in the study of such drawings even more apparent.

Nineteenth-century Plains artists created various kinds of pictorial imagery. Some images referenced visions and were often made as rock art in secluded places where people might have sought such power. Some Plains men painted additional indications of supernatural protection on shields and lodges. Many other types of pictorial imagery were historical records painted on hides or drawn on paper. They fall into either of two basic categories. Kiowa, Blackfoot, Lakota, and Mandan people, among others, maintained calendars by drawing cryptic images that enabled people to recollect the events of a previous year or half-year (fig. 9). Other, more fully narrative representations recorded successes in battle and horse capture before the enforcement of the reservation system in the second half of the 1870s. Rock art and paintings on hide predominated, but other pictorial images certainly existed. Some were carved into trees as warnings to others or as messages to people who might have been away from camp on hunting expeditions when the rest of the village changed location.

Paintings on hide robes and shirts became increasingly complex during the second half of the nineteenth century as some artists recorded more detailed representations of battles and hunting expeditions. Such imagery was more common on the central and southern plains, whereas Northern Plains peoples such as the Blackfoot retained stronger ties to less naturalistically rendered horses and figures. Warriors earned the right to render or have someone else draw for them representations of their heroic deeds. As paper gradually became more available on the plains in the 1860s, with greater movement of non-Native people into and across the region, artists turned to this new material, with accompanying pencils, as an additional means of creating art. Although the materials differed, the reasons for creating drawings on paper were initially the same as those that guided paintings on hide robes and shirts.

The late-nineteenth-century research of Garrick Mallery is an important starting point for an examination of studies of Plains drawing and painting, although Mallery was certainly not the first Euroamerican to become intrigued by ways of communication that differed from the alphabet-driven, written languages with which he was familiar.

Linguistics was a major area of concern for the Bureau of American Ethnology, under whose imprint Mallery ultimately worked, and it was in the search for the evolution of separate language branches and of writing systems that Plains drawings and paintings received attention from Bureau ethnologists.

A retired army officer who had been seriously wounded during the Civil War, Mallery had previously worked at the US Geological and Geographical Survey with John Wesley Powell, gathering information about the West. He developed an interest in Native cultures at that time. He devoted the years between 1879 and his death in 1894 to the intensive study of sign language and what he called “picture writing.” His publications, particularly his *Pictographs of the North American Indians* (1886) and his massive *Picture Writing of the American Indians* (1893), not only were groundbreaking in their day but also remain essential today for attempts to understand Plains Indian representational imagery.<sup>35</sup> They also established biases that continue to affect investigations of Plains drawing and painting.

Through his work Mallery recorded many images that would otherwise surely have been lost, but he did so with a strong Bureau of American Ethnology focus, which formulated the questions he asked. He gathered information from military officers on the plains and integrated those data into the conclusions he drew. His goal was to determine the origins of writing systems in the evolutionary development of humankind.<sup>36</sup> Mallery examined surfaces that held pictorial writing systems in the Western Hemisphere, including the birch-bark scrolls of Great Lakes peoples, rock art images in various regions, and Plains Indian pictographic imagery. He concluded that when people such as the inhabitants of the Great Plains still used such pictorial forms, the imagery was similar to that of older examples, a conclusion that underscored continuity. His clearly expressed view was that individual variation was *not* a part of Native American cultures, thus denying the kind of increasing complexity that is apparent in Plains drawing and painting. Mallery wrote as if Native cultures themselves, not individual people, were the creators of these images:

*One very marked peculiarity of the drawings of the Indians is that within each particular system, such as may be called a tribal system, of pictography, every Indian draws in precisely the same manner. The figures of a man, of a horse, and of every other object delineated, are made by every one who attempts to make any such figures with all the identity of which their mechanical skill is capable, thus showing their conception and motive to be the same.*<sup>37</sup>

Mallery’s contributions in bringing together examples of imagery that relayed specific messages and in attempting to decode those messages, as well as his biases, continue to affect current scholarship. Pictographic dictionaries and attempts to further differentiate conventionalized representations form integral parts of many investigations of Plains Indian drawing and painting.<sup>38</sup> The concept of Plains imagery as communication also resonates with contemporary scholars. Mallery asserted, overoptimistically, that

if the simple vocabulary of conventions was understood, then the messages were perfectly clear. Perhaps most negatively, the lack of recognition of individuality constructed by Mallery continued well into twentieth-century scholarship.

Another Smithsonian-sponsored amateur ethnographer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, James Mooney, was also extremely interested in the peoples of the Great Plains. His 1896 study of the Ghost Dance and its history is but one example.<sup>39</sup> Vision-inspired designs that appeared on shields and some lodge covers were also a primary concern of Mooney's.<sup>40</sup> He chose the Kiowa people as the subject of his most intense research because he thought they were less acculturated than some of their neighbors and so offered a clearer view of "traditional" Plains life.

Mooney's most important published study of Plains representational imagery, *Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians* (1898), is a detailed examination of the shorthand visual icons employed by Kiowa people to record events twice yearly, enabling the group as a whole to recall its history and therefore keep it alive. Mooney analyzed four calendars, and his choice of words reveals his ideas about quality. More detailed representations were better than ones he termed "rude," despite the reality that calendar entries were intentionally cryptic rather than fully narrative. They were used to recount history, the visual entries serving as memory-jogging devices that facilitated the far more important oral narration of events. Mooney also believed firmly that calendars needed to be maintained on hide rather than on paper. He brought his biases clearly into view in his manner of dealing with one of the calendars, which, he wrote, "was originally drawn with a black pencil in a small notebook, and afterward, *by direction of the author*, redrawn in colored inks on buckskin."<sup>41</sup>

For Mooney and many other early scholars of Native American art and lifeways, authenticity was a central issue, and they deplored evidence of alteration of practices brought about by contact with non-Native people. Yet many of these scholars changed the lives of the people they studied, simply by the fact of their own contact with them. Mooney, for example, commissioned the Kiowa artist Silver Horn to create miniature tipi models with painted designs, as well as detailed paintings of the Sun Dance on full-scale hides.<sup>42</sup> Silver Horn also created works on paper for Mooney, including drawings of shield designs and a calendar that he recorded in a notebook similar to those the anthropologist used for his own field notes.<sup>43</sup>

For Mooney, hides were the more important surfaces for Plains Indian paintings, undoubtedly because he considered them more authentic than notebooks with pencil or ink drawings. Yet, the images of the Sun Dance that he commissioned were in no way traditional, because making detailed representations of ceremonial actions was not a typical Plains practice. Apparently, the need that early anthropologists such as Mooney felt to obtain ethnographic information outweighed their dictates against change. This was the era of "salvage" anthropology, when it was believed that information and material objects, including those that would ultimately be classified as art, had to be collected as rapidly as possible before Native cultures vanished, as anthropologists felt certain they

would. The willingness of anthropologists to commission works for their own ends, despite the blatant outside influence such patronage exerted, seems ironic at best. In these cases, the ends anthropologists sought must have seemed to justify the means, and some anthropologists turned blind eyes to their own contradictory, if not somewhat hypocritical, practices.

Given the foundational work of Mallery and Mooney, it is not surprising that twentieth-century studies of Plains representational drawings and paintings of a more fully narrative nature often had the concept of picture writing at their core. That is, researchers attempted to interpret what hoofprints or flying arrows, for example, meant in the context of the subject being depicted. The 1960s were a particularly important decade for increased examination of Plains representational imagery. In 1964 a drawing book from the Fort Marion period filled with images by the Southern Cheyenne prisoner-artist Cohoe appeared.<sup>44</sup> E. Adamson Hoebel and Karen Daniels Petersen provided an introduction and brief commentary for the small volume, closely following previous anthropological studies of Plains representational imagery.

The twentieth-century Smithsonian anthropologist John Ewers made immeasurable contributions to the study of Plains cultures. His dissertation, written for a PhD from Stanford University, was subsequently published as *Plains Indian Painting*.<sup>45</sup> In the book, Ewers explored both geometric and figurative painting on hides, analyzing techniques and style. Although he wrote as an anthropologist, he obviously valued the aesthetic quality of the works he studied.

Throughout his long career, Ewers returned to the subject of Plains representational imagery in several essays. One of them served as an introduction to *Howling Wolf: A Cheyenne Warrior's Graphic Interpretation of His People*, a 1968 book by Karen Daniels Petersen in which she published twelve drawings created by Howling Wolf after his release from Fort Marion.<sup>46</sup> Ewers's essay in the book provided a summary background for the development of Plains works on paper and briefly discussed influences that visiting non-Native artists had on Plains artists. Ewers addressed the development of drawings on paper for new audiences that included army officers in the latter part of the nineteenth century, as well as the unique venue that developed at Fort Marion. Unsurprisingly, the twelve post-Fort Marion drawings by Howling Wolf were most valuable for Ewers because of the ethnographic information they offered about Plains Indian practices. Particularly important for him was a "semi-diagrammatic rendering of a Plains Indian horse race," which called attention to the elements of picture writing that the artist employed and Ewers valued.<sup>47</sup> Ewers offered similar views of the development of Plains Indian painting elsewhere, and he expressed his opinion about the positive influences that anthropologists such as James Mooney had on the Native people with whom they worked.<sup>48</sup>

Petersen's lengthier contributions to the 1968 volume are far more significant than has been generally recognized. She provided a biography of the artist, as well as commentaries on each drawing and the captions that had been added to them by Ben Clark, a scout and post interpreter at Fort Reno, Indian Territory, who knew Howling Wolf.



With the captions as a basis, Petersen interpreted the drawings, gave ethnographic information about the customs and occasions depicted, and raised what are now recognized as vital questions about different views of history. She treated the drawings themselves as historical documents no less valuable because they were visual rather than written.<sup>49</sup>

By far the most significant contribution to the study of Plains Indian drawing in general in the 1960s came with Helen Blish's 1967 publication of the massive volume of drawings created during the reservation period by the Lakota artist Amos Bad Heart Bull. Her *A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux* offered interpretations of the more than four hundred drawings in Bad Heart Bull's manuscript, along with essays on his development as an artist, his role as a historian, and the importance of the drawings he created.<sup>50</sup> Although other, more concise essays had accompanied the publication of drawing books from Fort Marion and the Great Plains before this, Blish's work set the stage for more complex, in-depth investigations of Plains artists. Like Ewers, Blish was an anthropologist, but she readily acknowledged Bad Heart Bull's aesthetic concerns and his development as an artist over the twenty years during which he created the drawings that filled his ledger.

Dorothy Dunn included some Plains works on paper in her 1968 *American Indian Painting of the Southwest and Plains Areas*, but her discussion of them was limited.<sup>51</sup> She used the drawings as a way of establishing the background against which Plains painting of the twentieth century developed as an art form. That she approached nineteenth-century drawings and paintings as an art teacher rather than as an anthropologist was, however, an extremely important step in the study of these works. Earlier, in 1965, a particularly influential article by the art historian Howard Rodee had appeared, in which Rodee explored the way in which Plains painting and drawing changed from the early to the later part of the nineteenth century.<sup>52</sup> He emphasized an increased naturalism that resulted as Plains artists had greater contact with non-Native artists and grew increasingly comfortable with new materials such as paper and pencils. Rodee included a discussion of the Fort Marion period in his chronology of defining influences.

In 1971 Petersen published her seminal *Plains Indian Art from Fort Marion*, which offered a detailed discussion of Richard Pratt and the three-year exile of the Southern Plains warriors and chiefs. She identified all the artists and the locations of their works then known from the Fort Marion period, giving at least brief biographical information for each artist. She classified them as major or minor artists on the basis of the number of drawings then attributed to each man. Tellingly, her book included a pictographic dictionary to assist readers of the visual images in understanding the pictorial language at work. The approach she took to some of the issues raised by Fort Marion art and her classification of major and minor artists might be questioned today, given the intervening discoveries of additional drawings, applications of new methodologies, and emerging theoretical considerations. But Petersen's study of Fort Marion art was groundbreaking, and it remains an essential source for all subsequent studies of drawings from the Florida period. She launched an extremely important investigation of drawings by

artists working at Fort Marion, setting the stage for further examination of the ways in which various prisoners approached subject matter and the styles in which they rendered those subjects.

Since the 1970s many other books and myriad articles have appeared in which researchers explore Plains representational imagery in drawings created both on the plains and at the Florida prison. Some have focused on the work of individual artists;<sup>53</sup> others have provided the framework for examinations of changes apparent in drawings created by individuals at different stages of their lives and for diverse patrons.<sup>54</sup> Some scholars have explored the issues of how and why Plains drawing and painting changed from the pre-reservation period to Fort Marion and the reservation era.<sup>55</sup> Still others analyze representational imagery from individual cultures during certain periods.<sup>56</sup> In some cases, entire ledger books have been reproduced, with commentaries exploring the actions depicted on each page and attempting to align them with the battles being depicted.<sup>57</sup> Of particular importance for its in-depth study was the 1997 publication of a book of Cheyenne drawings taken from the Summit Springs battlefield in present-day Colorado in 1869.<sup>58</sup> Other facsimiles have been published through commercial galleries, which began selling increasing numbers of these drawings during the later part of the twentieth century.<sup>59</sup>

Auction houses and galleries specializing in Native American art have sold drawings both as complete drawing books and as single sheets removed from larger volumes. As auction prices for Native American art in general began to escalate during the last few decades of the twentieth century, so did the prices paid for Plains drawings. Undoubtedly as a result of market developments, drawing books have most often been sold page by page through commercial venues, thus eliminating the context for the drawings as part of a single volume. Some galleries have financed facsimiles of ledger books, not only to market the drawings but also as a record of complete books with commentaries generally concentrating on the ethnographic information provided by the artists. Individual warrior society paraphernalia and details of clothing, shields, and body paint, as well as interpretations of pictographic conventions employed by Plains artists, have garnered the greatest interest. Individual artistic styles have also received some study, but not to the same extent as ethnographic information. Students of the drawings have increasingly attempted to align pictorial imagery with the historic incidents or battles depicted. Some commercially funded publications have provided only brief commentaries and pictographic dictionaries; others have been masterful explorations of individual drawings and of the importance of the books as a whole.<sup>60</sup>

Museum exhibitions, too, burgeoned in the late twentieth century. They added in other ways to the public's interest in Plains drawings and to acceptance of the drawings as single-sheet works of art. The largest and most wide-reaching exhibition to date has been *Plains Indian Drawings 1865–1935: Pages from a Visual History*, which traveled from late 1996 to the fall of 1997.<sup>61</sup> For many museums that hold full volumes of drawings—either ones created on the plains in commercially produced, lined accountants' ledgers or Fort

Marion examples generally in unlined artists' drawing books—the need to conserve these fragile works has led to the separation of individual pages from their acidic covers. Indeed, the great majority of paper on which such drawings were made is not of archival quality, and museum conservators have battled to extend the lives of the drawings.

Separating the pages from contact with one another and with the volume's cardboard covers has been beneficial, but it has also altered the way in which these drawings are seen. Not only have they become parts of museum and private collections as rarified objects, but they are also seen as single-sheet entities, hung on walls in glass-enclosed frames. Even when drawings are placed on gallery walls or in display cases sequentially, in the order in which the pages appeared in books, the context is dramatically altered. The origin of the drawings in a book that could be held in one's hands, the pages turned to reveal additional entries, is now easily forgotten. Exhibition techniques have also aided in the sale of Plains drawings as single-sheet creations. Now, more accustomed to seeing them displayed individually, collectors are able to view the pages as self-contained master drawings that can also be exhibited in private homes.

Additional access to high-quality reproductions of Plains drawings is being made possible through digitization projects as museums make their collections available online. The most extensive digital effort to date is Ross Frank's Plains Indian Ledger Art Digital Publishing Project, which in 2010 had seventeen books of ledger drawings from both public and private collections available for viewing online.<sup>62</sup>

The parallels between the ways in which Plains drawings have been collected and the ways in which medieval manuscripts have been treated are striking. Indeed, more than one major private collector of Plains drawings has come to them after a career of studying and collecting medieval manuscripts. European illuminated manuscripts have suffered even more drastic fates over the centuries since their creation, with pages not only separated from the original books and sold individually, but even mutilated. Collectors from at least the sixteenth century forward cut richly illuminated capital letters, for example, from a page and adhered them to other surfaces, often in a different book.<sup>63</sup> This kind of composite creation has, for the most part, been avoided where Plains drawings are concerned; most pages remain untrimmed and intact. Alterations have been made to individual drawings, but at least some of these presumably happened during the nineteenth century and might well have been made by Plains warrior-artists themselves. Several drawings that have come to light show attempts to alter the identities of non-Native enemies by adding long hair, for example, to make them appear Native.<sup>64</sup> Because the federal government, at least on occasion, used Plains ledger drawings as evidence against Plains warriors who had fought non-Native enemies,<sup>65</sup> such alterations were probably made before the drawings fell into the army's possession.

Since 1990 two Plains ledger artists have garnered more attention than any others. The known works of the Kiowa reservation-period artist Silver Horn and the Cheyenne warrior-artist Howling Wolf have each received extensive examinations.<sup>66</sup> Each man created many drawings, and each, in his vastly different way, provided an important view

of a Plains artist working under varying circumstances and for different audiences. As the two most fully studied of the artists of their medium, these men are better known and more widely recognized than their peers. Both artists were exceptional, and both developed their representational skills by calling on previously established practices in their cultures and also expanding their drawings to include new directions, new subject matter, and new styles of art.

Although not intentionally developed to do so, the studies of Howling Wolf and Silver Horn have established a type of canon or standard in the history of Native American art. The existence of a canon leads to comparisons; the works of already recognized artists often become the yardsticks against which the works of other artists are examined. Although Silver Horn and Howling Wolf indeed merit such attention, so do many nineteenth-century Plains artists who have yet to be recognized to the same extent. The canon of nineteenth-century Native American drawing and painting needs expansion, and recent large traveling exhibitions and extensive studies of entire ledger books have been important steps toward this end.<sup>67</sup>

### Art at Fort Marion

Although drawings made before and after the enforcement of the reservation system on the Great Plains have received extensive study by anthropologists and art historians, arguably the greatest academic focus has been on drawings created by the Fort Marion prisoners.<sup>68</sup> Richard Pratt encouraged the captives in Florida to draw by ordering drawing books, pencils, crayons, and inks from New York art supply houses for the men to use. He urged them to create images representing their new lives and experiences in Florida and their journey to the strange new land in which they found themselves. In fact, the men created many more images of their previous lives on the plains than they did of their prison existence.

The Fort Marion years saw a fundamental shift in Plains representational drawing and painting. Subject matter diversified as the exiled artists experienced vastly different lives in Florida, and the role of drawing expanded to include a large amount of art made specifically for outside sale. Influences were abundant. The artists in Florida had enforced time in which they could make drawings, and they were exposed to a diversity of visual stimuli. Of course, the men also influenced one another. New subject matter appeared, initiated by some as-yet-unknown artist, only to be taken up by a fellow prisoner and depicted in a different manner. The give and take between Fort Marion artists and the ways in which different men depicted the same subjects are areas that have only begun to be explored in any detail.<sup>69</sup>

Although many Fort Marion drawings were made to be sold to visitors to Saint Augustine, focusing on them solely as “tourist” or “souvenir” art not only demeans them but also ignores the many vital roles they played for their creators. Dislocated from their homes and families, the warrior-artists in Florida drew in a unique atmosphere but were not totally removed from all aspects of their lives on the plains. Some chiefs were among



the prisoners, and just as they had on the plains, these men—such as the Cheyennes Eagle Head and Heap of Birds and the Kiowas Lone Wolf and Woman's Heart—held positions in Florida different from those of the younger men. Pratt conferred with the chiefs, seeking their opinions and support on matters ranging from assisting during a suspected escape plot by Kiowa warriors to selecting younger men as dancers for a public program.<sup>70</sup> To date, no drawings are known to have been made by these elder statesmen of the Florida group; drawing apparently was an activity undertaken by the younger prisoners.

Two Plains women were also transported to Florida. Mochi, a Cheyenne woman and wife of the Fort Marion inmate Medicine Water, was a prisoner because she had been identified as having taken part in a notorious attack on a wagon train and the subsequent kidnapping of four non-Native girls. The other, a Comanche woman, together with her daughter, had refused to be separated from her husband, Black Horse, the child's father.<sup>71</sup> No drawings created by either of the two women or the young girl have come to light. It is generally held that women on the southern plains did not make representational images, although apparently the Cheyenne chief Eagle Head did receive picture letters from his wife in Indian Territory, whether she actually drew the images or had them drawn to her specification.<sup>72</sup> The most prolific of the Fort Marion artists were well-established warriors, Zotom and Howling Wolf among them. Such men, known in their own cultures for their achievements as warriors, would have held positions of honor among their fellow tribesmen in Florida. In the new social system that developed at Fort Marion, their status was probably recognized by fellow captives from other cultures as well.

L. James Dempsey, in his 2007 book *Blackfoot War Art*, which covers rock art and hide and panel paintings from 1880 to 2000, described reasons for making art that can be compared to those of the Fort Marion prisoners.<sup>73</sup> Earlier Blackfoot representational imagery, like its counterparts on the southern plains, was almost exclusively battle oriented. The Blackfoot, however, retained stronger ties to relatively cryptic ways of representing figures and objects than artists farther south generally did. Blackfoot warriors also shared an intense cultural requirement for the truthful representation of a person's accomplishments, which did not diminish after the end of the Plains wars. When Glacier National Park opened in 1910, Blackfoot artists began to make increasing numbers of pictorial images for non-Native visitors. From 1913 to 1930 they also painted panels for the interiors of hotels associated with the Great Northern Railway, both at Glacier and at nearby Waterton National Park.<sup>74</sup> These panels and other paintings were for tourists, but they were also ways of "recording and sustaining their own history in their own traditional ways."<sup>75</sup> In addition, the hotel panels, at least, were commissioned works. Dempsey underscored that the men invited to paint these panels did so not simply for the money the commissions provided but "to take advantage of an opportunity to exhibit some of the sources of their pride."<sup>76</sup>

All the subjects explored by Fort Marion prisoner-artists can be seen in the same light. They are representations of cultural pride, whether they provide accounts of the

surrender of the Kiowa people, the arduous journey to Florida, life in prison, or life on the plains. Surviving the trip to FloFrida and imprisonment there were achievements that can be compared to surviving battles. Zotom's historical records are extensions of the Kiowa calendrical system, and Howling Wolf's renditions of life on the plains are statements of Cheyenne lifeways and of self-worth and cultural values.

### Art and Anthropology: Working Together

Inquiries into Plains Indian drawings and paintings as art rather than as purely ethnographic objects are related to the history of Native American art as art while simultaneously remaining distinct from that history. Certainly, the aesthetic merits of Native works, from ceramics and pipe carving to beadwork and architectural murals, have been recognized by many, but not until the 1930s was Native American art exhibited on any significant scale for its aesthetic merits. A 1941 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, in which the works were shown as artistic objects without anthropological context, is often cited as the first such major venue.<sup>77</sup>

Today, given the changing nature of art history as a field, its increasing inclusion of different methodologies, and the complexities of exhibiting works from diverse cultures, museums continue to struggle with whether to exhibit Native art solely as an aesthetic creation or to include anthropological information. If the latter is attempted, how much information should be included, and who should provide it? Even staff of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC have debated this issue. For the museum's inaugural exhibition, they chose to eliminate any major contextual information and allow the works to be seen primarily in an aesthetic light.<sup>78</sup> What is lost or gained in either manner of presentation is very much under consideration.

Anthropology's subjects have generally been so-called Others—tribal peoples from Africa and the Americas and everyone else belonging to cultures different from those of western Europe, such as the peoples of Asia. Anthropologists have long recognized different cultural systems of aesthetics and indeed developed the subdiscipline of visual anthropology to encompass many kinds of imagery, whether or not created by Native people. Art history, however, has been slow to bring Native American art into the larger discipline.<sup>79</sup> The gradual increase in attention paid to Native American art as art rather than solely as ethnographic object comes at a time when the field of art history itself has been expanding rapidly in the United States and altering its basic methods throughout the world. Although precedents are evident much earlier, art history initially developed as an academic discipline during the nineteenth century, its aims tied closely to identifying the artists of specific works and compiling biographies of those artists. By the mid-twentieth century, interpreting works of art—finding the meanings or potential meanings behind the imagery—had become a paramount focus, particularly in the United States. The latter part of the twentieth century saw greater concentration on theory than on the work of art itself, although the two are intricately bound together.

The young field of Native American art history has experienced all these developments and many more, but it remains closely tied to some of the early questions of artistic identity. In part, this concern with connoisseurship, or recognition of individual and cultural differences in Native American art, is attributable to the ahistorical way in which Native American art has often been treated. A notorious exhibition mounted during the 1980s reflected this view when, in displaying African, Native American, and other non-Western arts in connection with works by Picasso and other “major” European artists, the curators wrote label copy explaining that the non-Western material could not be discussed because it had no history.<sup>80</sup>

The ahistorical view is closely connected to the romantic sense that Native arts are unchanging and that the only “real” Native American art was created before European contact. If made after that time, it could be authentic only if it showed no evidence of contamination by non-Native influences. But Native American art, including drawings and paintings made by plains men held in a Florida prison, is not ahistorical. It has a history or, more accurately, multiple histories, and the Fort Marion drawings share in the history of the Great Plains themselves.

Plains Indian drawings and paintings on paper from the nineteenth century have certainly been included in relatively recent survey texts in Native American art history. Such works did not appear in earlier visual surveys of Native art, undoubtedly because of what was seen, and is still seen by some, as their “untraditional” nature.<sup>81</sup> These were drawings made with materials obviously introduced by outsiders, and the representations of figures themselves often suggest the influence of non-Native forms on Native artists.

Anthropological inquiry has most often focused on cultures rather than on exploring the individuality of members of those cultures. In societies such as those from which the Fort Marion inmates came, even though they placed great emphasis on personal accomplishments, the good of the social community was always more important than that of the individual. Art history, conversely, has more frequently focused intently on the individual, often designating certain artists artistic geniuses. But artists are active in specific places at specific times, and those contexts affect and sometimes are affected by the art created in them. Art is a part of cultural expression and therefore reflects some aspects of the culture of its creators, even when it is made in defiance of that very culture.

Neither anthropological inquiry nor traditional art historical methods can supply all the answers to the many questions raised by drawings from Fort Marion. Taken in combination with broader historical issues, the two together can reveal much more about these works.

### Drawing and Painting on the Great Plains and in Florida

Plains Indian cultures developed representational systems that allowed them to relay important messages, including directional messages carved into trees and records of individual visions pecked into rocks. Other, more widely known and readily recognized types of representational imagery were concerned with battle successes. Warriors

painted records of their achievements on hide shirts, leggings, and robes. Even body paint often referenced individual accomplishments, with parallel stripes indicative of battle honors and hands painted on a man's chest telling everyone that he had fought an enemy in hand-to-hand combat. Many Native people developed such systems of shorthand pictorial imagery and used it to relay information deemed vital.

With limited exceptions, such as rocks and trees, the surfaces on which Plains warriors rendered images, such as robes, hides, and skin, were connected to the human body. There could be no misunderstanding who the protagonist was, and people of the artist's community, accustomed to the same visual language, could not mistake the nature of the brave action accomplished. A warrior wore on his body signs of his brave actions because he had earned the right to do so. They were clear proclamations of his achievements. He was a walking indication of both cultural history and his own part in that history. Prince Maximilian of Wied, who traveled throughout the northern plains in the 1830s, noted that such images were painted in order to allow a man to hand down his reputation to posterity.<sup>82</sup>

What happened, though, when a man's deeds were removed from his body and placed inside the covers of a book? How did Plains artists, and indeed Plains cultures as a whole, make this transition? Books can be closed; they can be removed from the person whose deeds are recorded in them. How were the deeds celebrated? How did books allow a warrior to hand down his reputation to posterity?

The book, although it could be and was on occasion strapped to a man's body as he rode into battle, was not an article of clothing open to public view.<sup>83</sup> Books were, during the pre-reservation era and even during the reservation years, rare commodities, and warriors often shared them to record their deeds. Many books show the work of several artists, and some even suggest that two artists worked on the same page.<sup>84</sup> Perhaps these men were members of the same war party or the same warrior society. Contemporaneous recorded observations are few, but they do tell us that men sat around the camp, opening the books and using them to tell stories about the battles depicted in them and undoubtedly about related events.<sup>85</sup> Some Plains peoples, such as the Kiowas and the Lakotas, also had calendars that allowed the same kind of preservation of group memory.

For many people in the twenty-first century, books hold a special significance. There is, after all, something precious about a book, an object that can be held and its pages turned to reveal new information, with the promise of more to come in the following pages. When the end of the book is reached, it can always be examined again, in whatever order the viewer desires. Fascination with books obtains no matter what subject matter, factual or fictional, is explored inside their covers. We tend to think of books as primarily textual works with perhaps some illustrations, but the reverse is also common. The connection of artists to books is often strong. Artists' books, as records of their creative outpourings, bound and contained neatly within covers, continue to captivate artists and viewers alike—a phenomenon not unique to any single culture or worldview.





The two books of drawings that Eva Scott commissioned from Howling Wolf and Zotom at Fort Marion are both artists' books and historical narratives. Each artist recorded events from his own life and those of others, on the Great Plains and in Florida. In doing so, both men followed the Plains Indian practice of preserving records of accomplishments through drawing and painting.

Yet, the Florida drawings and the subjects explored in them differ markedly from what had preceded them on the plains. Although Howling Wolf's and Zotom's drawings were rooted in a long-established use of two-dimensional imagery, they expanded the types of subjects beyond the previously customary ones. Some of the drawings mirrored those in which warriors recorded their brave deeds on the plains, but other

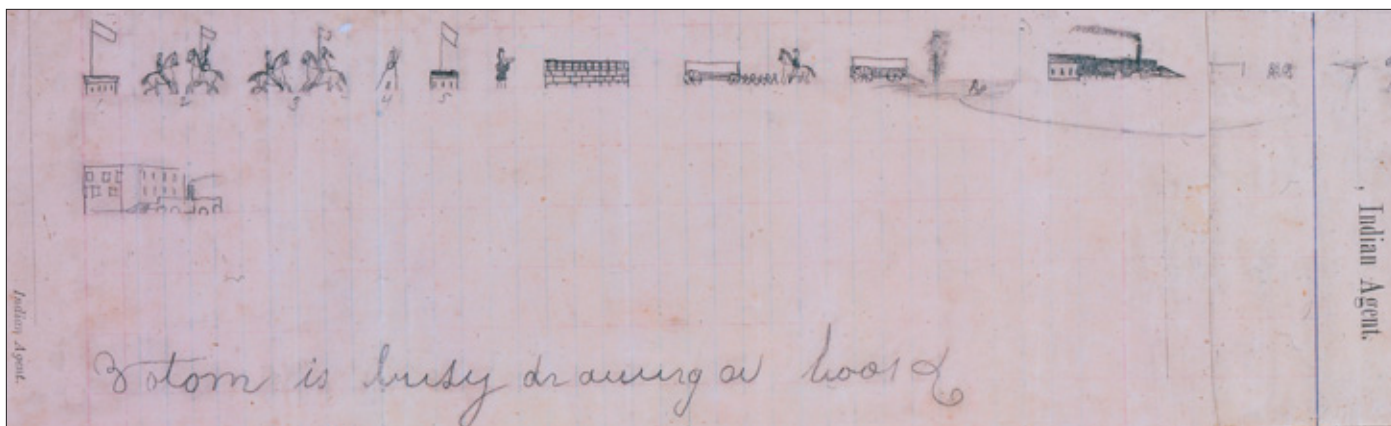
**Figure 11.**  
*Wo-haw (Kiowa), untitled, 1875.*  
*Pencil and crayon on paper, 8.5 by 11 inches.*  
*Collections of the Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, Missouri; N36781, 1882.18.31.*

images referenced new circumstances and met new needs. That both Howling Wolfs and Zotom's drawing books were commissioned directly from them, that the drawing materials were supplied to them, and that they drew images based on both their own choices and those of Eva Scott are but some of the vast differences that distinguish Fort Marion art from traditional Plains Indian art. The men who drew at Fort Marion became self-conscious artists in a wholly different atmosphere.

There is no doubt that artists on the plains were concerned with aesthetics, with the proper way of doing things, whether that was painting a hide with representational imagery, creating geometric patterns on *parfleche* (folded hide envelopes), or beading and quilling clothing and other objects. What differed dramatically about the Fort Marion art was the captivity of the artists, the manner in which they interacted with patrons, and the new representational schemes to which they were continually exposed. They were taken from their homes to a foreign place and created art at least partially in response to that dislocation. Some scholars might consider them to have stood at the brink of modernity, experiencing the kind of dramatic rupture with the past that many see as a defining characteristic of modernity.<sup>86</sup> The abrupt, forced removal of the prisoners from their families, land, and previous lifestyles, their transportation to Saint Augustine, and their situation there under Richard Pratt's assimilationist and militaristic disciplinary policies certainly constitute such a rupture. Arjun Appadurai writes of modernity as "everyday cultural practice through which the work of the imagination is transformed."<sup>87</sup> The Fort Marion prisoner-artists experienced both dramatic rupture and the continuity of at least some aspects of their previous cultural practices. The art from their Florida period reflects these seemingly contradictory effects.

Books mark the passage of time in various ways. Leafing through a printed book, a reader can enter the story, be it visual, written, or both, at any number of points, reading forward or moving around within the text. The way in which the reader engages with the written word, therefore, has no guaranteed relationship to the order in which the book was written or the order in which events recorded in it took place, whether those events are fictional, factual, or somewhere in between. The same is true of books filled primarily with drawings rather than words.

A few examples are known of drawings made on the Great Plains that sequence events chronologically,<sup>88</sup> but most known drawing books provide no clear evidence—at least none that has been effectively interpreted by contemporary viewers—that the warrior-artists intentionally placed events inside the covers of accountants' ledgers in a linear fashion. The exceptions to this rule are enough to suggest the need for further exploration of the practice, but unfortunately the events recorded by Plains artists are now often difficult to align with their specific references in Plains history. A battle between Cheyennes and their Pawnee enemies, for example, might be any of a great number of such battles that took place during the 1860s and 1870s. And even if the artist did sequence the drawings in a way that was meaningful to him, whether chronologically or by importance of event, for example, the way in which subsequent viewers



examine the pages of the book might well have no relationship to the way the artist conceived of the book as a whole.

Artists, particularly those at Fort Marion, where blank drawing books were readily available, might well have worked with plans of which subjects to place in which order on the pages. A sketch by Zotom on lined ledger paper that might represent such a plan shows tiny representations including two buildings with flags, two pairs of riders facing each other, a tipi, a structure created of individual blocks of brick or stone, two views of covered wagons, two of trains, and a man apparently swimming (fig. 12). The handwritten caption on the drawing says, "Zotom is busy drawing a book." Edwin Wade and Jacki Rand have suggested that Zotom's tiny sketches were related to drawing books with images depicting the journey from Indian Territory to Florida, books that were perhaps already on order from customers.<sup>89</sup> Comparison with drawing books that Zotom filled with images at Fort Marion, including the one he completed for Eva Scott, suggests that he followed a visual outline of images to render in his detailed accounts of events leading to the surrender of the Kiowa people and the journey to Fort Marion. Zotom did not, however, always follow the same order or include drawings of all the same events in his Fort Marion books.

One set of four sequential drawings is known from Howling Wolf's work at Fort Marion, through which he tells a story about the gathering for and conclusion of negotiations for the treaty of Medicine Lodge in 1867.<sup>90</sup> But what approach Howling Wolf and other Fort Marion artists took to the order of the majority of images in their books is unknown. Perhaps some men worked from the back of the book forward, and others, from the middle outward. There was no set convention in Plains Indian culture for the use of bound volumes and the "right" way to fill them with images. Antecedents such as calendars that the Kiowa people kept on hides organized events in various ways. Some were linear, some circular, and some serpentine in order.

Art historians and many anthropologists might ask how cultural differences are indicated in Plains drawing and painting. Attempts have been made to suggest stylistic

**Figure 12.**  
 Zotom, sketch, about 1875, captioned "Zotom is busy drawing a book." The vignettes in this sketch may have served Zotom as a guide for later drawings of events in his life and his people's history. National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1996.017.0206B.



differences between Cheyenne and Kiowa drawings, for example, but these have not been especially convincing, in part because individual people, not cultures, drew the images. Certainly, men recording their heroic deeds on the plains would have done so in keeping with their culture's assessments of bravery and of what constituted important actions, but they did so in varying styles. The same undoubtedly occurred in Saint Augustine.

### Florida and Fort Marion in the 1870s

Most contemporary art historians, and certainly ethnographers, who examine works created by artists, no matter from which cultures or time periods, are concerned with the social context in which the works were made. This holds true for explorations of Plains Indian art in general and Fort Marion art in particular. When assessing alterations in subject matter or style of visual imagery in Plains drawings and paintings made before and after the enforcement of the reservation system, one must consider surrounding historical and cultural changes. Fort Marion represents a distinctive time and place of creation for drawings, a milieu dramatically different from that of the prisoners' homelands.

Some discussions of Fort Marion drawings have treated them as if they were products of the Florida exile, and to some extent this is true. Art, like other remaining evidence of times past, is a document of the period of its creation. Yet, these drawings did not come into being simply because of the situation in which the Plains prisoners were placed. Instead, they helped define for their creators and for contemporaneous viewers and purchasers—not just for readers and viewers today—what Fort Marion was between mid-1875 and mid-1878. Perceptions of the Fort Marion period and of the chiefs and warriors imprisoned there would have been, and would be now, decidedly different if so many drawings had not been made there.

Fort Marion artists created their drawings with materials that were probably new to some of them. Certainly, the ready availability of drawing books and a wide range of inks, pencils, and crayons was something unknown to these men on the plains. Such materials, the encouragement to draw, and the artists' captivity were all part of the impetus for the creation of so many drawings in Florida. Still, the men known to have made these images had to want to do so. Despite the reality of their exile and imprisonment, nothing suggests that any of the men was forced to draw. An atmosphere existed at Fort Marion that encouraged the creation of drawings and inspired experimentation.

Fort Marion was a unique environment in which prisoners from five Southern Plains cultures were held for three years. Although the Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples had long been allies, as had the Kiowas and Comanches, the few Caddo prisoners were more isolated. The Cheyenne and Arapaho group was at least initially housed in different locations in the fort from the Kiowa and Comanche prisoners.<sup>91</sup> Ultimately, the prisoners developed a social system in Florida as they experienced a new, enforced life together. This resulted in an altogether different social dynamic.<sup>92</sup> Some aspects of life on the plains were shared by all the prisoners, including the status of chiefs and prominent warriors, a social structuring that continued in Florida.



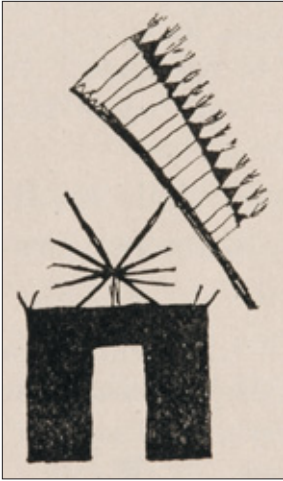
Recognizing that Fort Marion was a unique environment, however, does not answer the intriguing question of how a substantial change in cultural attitudes toward drawing occurred there between mid-1875 and mid-1878. Both the creators and the patrons of Fort Marion art came to their roles with varied needs and expectations. No definitive statement can be made about what all the prisoner-artists in Saint Augustine wished to express, nor can any unilateral assessment of the purchasers' agendas be made, but some discussion of the world of Fort Marion and its effect on the art created there can help illuminate many of the messages conveyed by the resulting drawings.

The original collectors and purchasers of these drawings differed markedly from the audiences for whom drawings and paintings were made on the Great Plains. They also differed from one another. For some patrons of Fort Marion drawings, the works reflected what they perceived as the positive efforts that both the Indians and Richard Pratt were making toward education and acculturation. Other people must have collected drawings because they suggested just the opposite—a view of the prisoners as criminals.

The artists who created the drawings, too, differed from one another. They made drawings for a variety of reasons, some of which were little different from reasons for making drawings detailing battle exploits on the plains. Yet, the Fort Marion prisoners came from five diverse Plains cultures, each with its own value system and worldview. Neither the Caddo nor the Comanche culture is known to have had a significant practice of representational drawing or painting for recording battle deeds before the Fort Marion confinement.<sup>93</sup> Perhaps in keeping with that lack of extensive precedent, no drawings have come to light that are known to have been created in Saint Augustine by prisoners from either of these cultures.

Existing Fort Marion drawings are predominantly by Cheyenne and Kiowa prisoners, with a few from the two Arapaho inmates. Thirty-two Cheyenne men and one woman were imprisoned in Florida, and twenty-seven Kiowa men. By sheer numbers, then, the pool of potential artists was weighted toward Kiowa and Cheyenne men. But even this predominance of potential artists would not have resulted in so many drawings if, by either past experience or lack of contemporaneous encouragement, the Fort Marion artists had been uninterested in drawing. Cheyenne culture had a well-established practice of representational drawing and painting prior to Fort Marion, but Kiowa culture differed in the types of imagery that filled daily life. The two Arapaho prisoners, Packer and White Bear, present a problem for any extensive discussion, because only two drawings have been attributed to them from the Fort Marion period. Petersen concluded that they were created jointly by the two Arapaho men because both of their names appear on the drawings.<sup>94</sup> A close examination of the drawings, however, reveals that they were made by one artist alone.<sup>95</sup> The “signatures” are, rather, identifications of the two Arapaho men represented in each drawing.

The Kiowas are well known for their vibrantly painted tipis, vision-inspired paintings on shields, and body and horse painting. Extant examples of Kiowa representational imagery based on daily life experiences, whether related to battle or to other events, were



**Figure 13.**

*Kiowa calendar entry for the summer of 1869, depicting a captured enemy war bonnet above a Sun Dance lodge. The lodge was a standard icon for “summer.” Reproduced from Mooney, *Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians*, p. 326, fig. 145.*

most frequently used as parts of calendars in the pre-Fort Marion years. Calendar keepers maintained visual records composed of cursory images that marked half-years for the bands of which they were members. Unlike the calendars, or winter counts, of the Lakota people, who recorded only one entry per year, Kiowa calendars included entries for winters and summers of the same annual cycle. Under a barren tree or a black bar standing for winter, together with a tree in foliage or an image of the Sun Dance lodge denoting summer, the calendar keeper recorded a figure or small vignette that suggested a memorable event of that half-year. The winter of 1862–63, for example, saw abnormally heavy snow and was referred to as the “treetop winter,” so it was depicted by a tree with a wavy line above it. The summer of 1869 appeared as a war bonnet captured from an enemy (fig. 13).<sup>96</sup> The entries, although small and cryptic, were specific enough to allow the calendar keeper and others familiar with the group’s history to recount the incident depicted and its effect on the community, as well as other events from the same time. Calendars ensured the ongoing verbal recounting of history through the mnemonic function of the images.

Only one documented hide painting with representational imagery is known to have been painted by a Kiowa artist prior to Fort Marion,<sup>97</sup> and no known books of drawings have come to light that were created by Kiowa artists before either the enforcement of the reservation system or the Fort Marion confinement.<sup>98</sup> Candace Greene has published one Kiowa drawing made on paper in the 1860s.<sup>99</sup> One Kiowa lodge is well known for the paintings of battle imagery on its cover; it was a gift given by a Cheyenne chief to the Kiowa chief Tohausan, or Little Bluff, in 1845, when the Kiowa and Cheyenne people, formerly enemies, made peace.<sup>100</sup> Of the twenty-four currently known Fort Marion artists, nine were Kiowa, one or possibly two were Arapaho, and the remainder, either thirteen or fourteen, were Cheyenne. Approximately half the Kiowa artists are associated with only a handful of drawings each, whereas the other men created larger numbers of images. From the drawings remaining today, Zotom appears to have been the most prolific of the Kiowas. In comparison, several Cheyenne artists, including Howling Wolf, Making Medicine, and Bear’s Heart, created significant numbers of drawings.

With few exceptions, the general subject matter drawn by Kiowa artists did not differ markedly from that depicted by Cheyenne men. Both groups of prisoner-artists created views of their journey to Florida and of their lives there, as well as even more drawings of life on the plains, particularly genre scenes of their villages, hunting expeditions, and other daily activities, along with a far smaller number of images of battle encounters. When battles were portrayed, both Kiowa and Cheyenne artists drew encounters between individuals and larger-scale, panoramic scenes.

An assessment of the prisoners held at Fort Marion written at the time suggests differences one visitor saw among the cultures represented there. Abbie M. Brooks, writing under the pen name Silvia Sunshine, noted, “[The] Cheyennes have a rude system of representing their ideas by picture-writing, which may be traced up to the highest type of communicating thought by letter-writing. In this manner they have preserved legends, written history, and recorded songs.” By comparison, she praised the oratorical powers

of the Kiowa and the Arapaho men.<sup>101</sup> Whether or not she was capable of truly appreciating this power, given the language barrier, is unknown, but she clearly singled out the Cheyennes for their pictorial abilities.

Arguably, the single most often reproduced drawing from Fort Marion is one by the Kiowa artist Wohaw.<sup>102</sup> The drawing, depicting a man, presumably the artist himself, standing with one foot in his own Native world, suggested by a tipi and a buffalo, and the other foot in the non-Native world, indicated by a frame house and a steer, offers a comparison to vision-inspired painting rather than a depiction of daily life. Its attraction for contemporary audiences lies in its perceived commentary on the difficulty of living in two worlds and the impossible position in which Wohaw and the other Fort Marion prisoners found themselves. The drawing is without doubt an important one, but it is atypical of Fort Marion work. Unfortunately, through its continual reproduction, it has become suggestive of the entire body of work created in Saint Augustine. This image, with its great individuality, has become a prime object of study among works of art from Fort Marion, a perceived masterpiece ahead of its time, with a resulting lack of equivalent consideration of the larger body of Fort Marion work. Recent investigation of the drawing also suggests that the “two worlds” interpretation resides more in the minds of contemporary scholars than in Wohaw’s actual drawing.<sup>103</sup>

What stands out about Fort Marion drawings in comparison with those made by artists on the plains is their diversity of subject matter. Many of the artists rendered detailed views of the plains and their lives there. Although drawing these images was undoubtedly connected to the loss the prisoners felt in being exiled from their homes, the landscape details and the intricate representations of villages suggest that the artists were not trying simply to recall their homes but also to make those homes real to other people. All the Fort Marion drawings were part of a complex system of communication.

The artists also rendered images of many new places they saw and new experiences they had, which their contemporaries on the plains did not. Many drawings of the trip to Florida and life there depict landscapes and architecture that are descriptive of location to a far greater degree than drawings created before the Fort Marion incarceration. At least some of the men drew new places, new environments, and large towns in ways suggesting that they were attempting to capture likenesses of those places. In this way, the Florida men followed Plains Indian practices of employing representational imagery as historical records, whether as expanded calendar entries that became more fully narrative or as records of bravery.

Although the Red River war and its antecedent battles on the southern plains were over, the Fort Marion prisoners were engaged in other kinds of important fights. One of the most important was to maintain some aspects of their cultural and individual identities in the face of powerful forces of assimilation in the unfamiliar new land in which they found themselves, exiled from family and home. Drawings created in the Florida prison were important parts of their now peaceful but vital arsenal.



**Figure 14.**  
*Eva Scott, about 1877. Courtesy Acequia Madre House, Santa Fe, New Mexico.*