



AKTÁ LAKOTA

Museum & Cultural Center

- an outreach of St. Joseph's Indian School -



NATIONALLY RENOWNED CENTER OF AMERICAN INDIAN ART

TRADITIONS OF NATIVE AMERICAN LIFE

WANÍYETU WÓWAPI - WINTER COUNTS

Winter Counts are pictorial calendars of a tiyóšpaye (extended family) history and provided a unique look into the history of the Lakota Sioux people during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Unlike historical accounts recorded by European settlers and explorers, winter counts represent a rich Lakota tradition of oral history and storytelling. Community historians, known as winter count keepers, maintained and used these pictographic records to remember the sequence of events that marked each year. By referring to the winter count, members of a Lakota community could mark events in their own lives.

Originally, the memorable events were recorded on the walls of caves, canyons, and mountains than later on hides of buffalo, deer, elk, or cow, and eventually on ledger paper and muslin fabric.

Most [winter counts](#) include a single pictograph or an image that conveys meaning through resemblance, for each year. Often, the most memorable event of that year is symbolized on the calendar.

The winter months provided the Lakota the perfect opportunity to reflect on the past year and add significant events to their buffalo robe annual calendar . . . and since this was always done during the winter, this was traditionally known as “counting by winters.”



LAKOTA MOON CALENDAR - *HANYÍ WÓWAPI*

Waniyetu — The Cold and Dark Moons (Winter)

Winter signaled the beginning of a quieter time, during which a single campsite was used for the season. While women made and mended clothing, men went on raiding parties to ensure the camp's safety and strength. Winter was also a time for fun. Children gathered around the fire to listen to the words of their grandparents. Lakota elders preserved community history by telling stories and recounting past times. There also was time for games, dancing, and visiting.

Wanícokan Wi — Moon When the Deer Sheds Their Horns

Wiótehika Wi — The Hard Moon

Cannápopa Wi — Moon When Trees Crack From The Cold

Istáwicayazan Wi — Moon of Sore Eyes (Snow Blindness)

American Indians treasured nature and earth. The people's close connection to nature is seen in their calendars. Based on the moon cycles, the American Indian year was divided in to 13 moons with [each moon being 28 days long](#).

THE BEAUTY OF NATIVE AMERICAN BEADWORK

Hand-beaded crafts have long been a form of artistic expression and storytelling for Native American people. The introduction of glass beads by European colonizers opened the door to this rich and colorful tradition and today many artists invest their time and share their experience through this medium.

The Aktá Lakota Museum is proud to support these artists by sharing their pieces in our museum and [gift store](#) and encourages anyone wanting to learn more about this beautiful art form to visit.



Waniyetu:

The Cold and Dark Moons (Winter)

Wanícokan Wi Moon When the Deer Sheds Their Horns

Wiótehika Wi The Hard Moon

Cannápopa Wi Moon When Trees Crack From The Cold

Istáwicayazan Wi Moon of Sore Eyes (Snow Blindness)

The Lakota year is divided into 13 moons. Each moon is 28 days long, and every day represents something sacred:

Two days for the Great Spirit

Two days for the Mother Earth

Four days for the Four Winds

One day for the Spotted Eagle

One day for the Sun

One day for the Moon

One day for the Morning Star

Four days for the Four Ages

Seven days for the Seven Rites of the Sacred Pipe

One day for the Buffalo

One day for the Fire

One day for the Water

One day for the Rock

One day for the Two-legged People

THE FLUTE IN NATIVE AMERICAN TRADITION

Next to the drum, the most important Native American instrument is the flute. Used principally by Woodlands tribes, Southwestern tribes, and tribes from the Southern and Northern Plains, the flute was once a means of transmitting signals at night. However, the flute was most frequently used as a means by which a young man could communicate his love.

The flute is one of the [three melody instruments](#) used by Native American people and is an integral part of traditional Indian music. Among Native Americans, the voice is also regarded as a melody instrument as well as the drum. Rarely are the three instruments used ensemble.

Flutes were traditionally made of red cedar, redwood, or pine and were frequently decorated with small-carved animal fetishes, quillwork, beadwork, and feathers. Melodies for the flute are both traditional and contemporary.

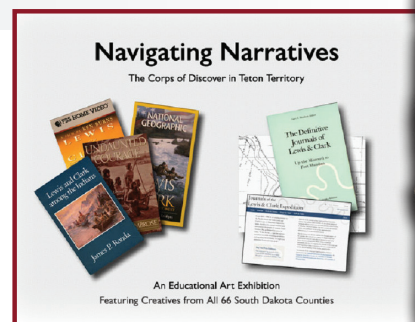
The flute tradition among Native American people is not a static form. New materials for crafting flutes are being used by flute musicians today. Like any dynamic, expressive cultural tradition, changing times and lifeways are reflected in the ways groups of people maintain or alter the parts of their lives that represent a historic sense of community, and for the moment, few young people are [learning the art of crafting and playing the flute](#).



MUSEUM HAPPENINGS

OPENING THIS SPRING

Navigating Narratives is the newest exhibition by the Center for American Indian Research and Native Studies. The exhibit focuses on the eight days in September of 1804 when the Corps of Discovery traveled up the Missouri River through the land of the Teton people. It closely examines the published journals of William Clark, Patrick Gass, John Ordway, and Joseph Whitehouse through the amazing artworks of sounds, words, and imagery by over sixty Lakotan and non-Lakotan living in South Dakota. The exhibit is planned to open this summer at the Aktá Lakota Museum.



MUSEUM RECEIVES SOUTH DAKOTA GREAT PLACE CERTIFICATION

The Aktá Lakota Museum has once again been recognized as one of South Dakota's 2022 Great Places! The museum has been a recipient of this award since 2002 when it was initially titled the Great Star Award.

The award granted annually by the SD Department of Tourism recognizes businesses and organizations that exemplify great service. The program is designed to identify and recognize businesses that develop and complete hospitality training programs for their staff, recognize and reward employees for offering great service, and find unique ways to show customer appreciation.

Dixie Thompson, Museum Director stated, "I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all our museum frontline staff for their spirit and teamwork— you are what makes our museum a Great Place!"



A STAR IS AMONG US!

Wanda Bunker, St. Joseph's Indian School Historical Center and Museum Coordinator has once again been recognized by the South Dakota Department of Tourism for her continued efforts in providing outstanding customer service. For her outstanding effort, Wanda received a letter from the Governor and a Great Face certificate.

As a South Dakota Great Face, Wanda took significant actions to maintain a top level of customer service for South Dakota and the Museum. The award is given to individuals who have shown outstanding performance in hospitality and customer service beyond the expectations of their job description. To receive this award an employee must be nominated, and have received three or more positive comments from customers, a testimonial from their manager, and completed the Department of Tourism's Hospitality Training program. It's no surprise that she has won this award for four consecutive years.



PARDON OUR MESS, WE ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION!

Pardon our mess as we remodel our gift shop area. Our bookstore will remain open during the process and visitors are encouraged to enjoy discounts on many discontinued items. Please continue to view or purchase items online at <https://shopping.aktalakota.org/> Mark your calendar for our grand opening in May!

STOP BY AND SEE US!

The Aktá Lakota Museum welcomes visitors and group tours. Our fall hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CST Monday through Friday, closed weekends and National holidays. Admission is free!

Would you like a tour of St. Joseph's campus or the Aktá Lakota Museum & Cultural Center? Campus tours are available in a variety of ways:



- **Self-guided audio tour (drive or walk):** For those who like to explore on their own, audio tours are available anytime by dialing 1-877-342-0829. Campus maps are available at the front entrance of the museum.
- **Private tours:** Year-round, by appointment only.

To schedule an appointment for a guided tour or request transportation for a tour email aktalakota@stjo.org or call 800-798-3452. [Need more information?](#)

Visits are free —with donations encouraged— and the lessons last forever. Learn more about Lakota traditions and more things to do at the museum at Aktalakota.org.

GENERAL MUSEUM INFORMATION

Aktá Lakota Museum & Cultural Center

St. Joseph's Indian School

1301 North Main Street

Chamberlain, SD 57325

Phone: 1-605-234-3452

Toll Free: 1-800-798-3452

E-Mail: aktalakota@stjo.org

Online: www.aktalakota.org

Memberships and Affiliations

ABA – American Bus Association

NTA – National Tour Association

ASDM – Association of South Dakota Museums

SDSHS – South Dakota State Historical Society

AAM – American Association of Museums

IACA – Indian Arts & Crafts Association

MPMA – Mountain Plains Museum Association

AASLH – American Assoc. for State &
Local History

Summer Hours

May – October

8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.; Monday - Saturday

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.; Sunday

Winter Hours

November – April

8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Monday - Friday

Closed weekends and National Holidays

- **Interactive Displays**
- **Medicine Wheel Garden**
- **After Hours Tours by Appointment**
- **Bus/RV Parking**
- **Handicap-Accessible**
- **Guided Tours Available Upon Request**

FREE ADMISSION

Donations Welcome



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