

Pictures of the Year

by Rachelle Kreisman



People today take lots of photos. Many people use cell phones to photograph their daily lives with friends and family.

Some photographs are really memorable. They capture important events, such as birthday parties or weddings, or they show beautiful places. Years later, people may look at these special photos to remember the past.

Long ago, however, cameras had not been invented yet. How did people back then record important moments?

Some people told stories about old times. Others wrote down what they remembered. Some people made special drawings to help them recall important moments. Among those people were Native Americans of the Lakota tribe.

Every year, Lakota leaders decided which event was most important. A Lakota artist was then asked to draw a special picture of that event. Because each year's picture was decided on during the winter, the drawings became

known as winter counts.

For a long time, winter counts were drawn on animal skins. Later, the drawings were done on paper. The pictures told the history of the tribe. Each year, the newest winter count was added to the Lakota collection of pictures from earlier times. That helped people keep track of the years.

Today, winter counts are important records of the Lakota's past.