

**PLAINS
LEDGER
ART**

BY GEORGE CURTIS LEVI

TOPIC:

HISTORY OF LEDGER ART

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CHEYENNE/ARAPAHO**

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Ledger Art is an Art form that captures a moment in time.

HISTORY OF LEDGER ART

What is collectively known as Ledger Art has its beginnings in Plains Pictorial Art that was made prior to the coming of Non Natives to the Great Plains.

Examples of such art are found in many places such as rock wall carvings, hide art, beadwork and painted tipi covers and liners.

Cheyenne People first were noted as doing lifelike drawings in a book in the 1840s at Bent's Fort in SE Colorado.

They had acquired paper, pencils, inks and crayons by trading, being gifted and also through incidences of warfare.

The earliest known existing ledger drawings are the Bowstring Book. In it were drawings of intertribal warfare, courting and hunting scenes. it dates from the 1850s.

Ledger Art spread to the Allies of the Cheyenne. The Arapaho, The Kiowa and The Western Lakota such as the Oglala and Sicangu Lakota Peoples.

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FORT MARION

In April of 1875 in now Western Oklahoma, Cheyenne, Kiowa and Comanche Warriors that had Participated in the Red River War were arrested, shackled and sent to Fort Marion Prison in St Augustine, Florida as Prisoners of War from 1875 to 1878.

While incarcerated many of them created ledger drawings for sale to the public. They were personal drawings that offered an intimate look to a way of life that was disappearing due to Manifest Destiny.

Some of the most prominent historical ledger artists known were incarcerated there. Men such as Howling Wolf, Cheyenne. Cohoe, Cheyenne. Matches, Cheyenne. Bears Heart, Cheyenne. Squint Eyes, Cheyenne. Zotom, Kiowa. Ohettoit, Kiowa.

Ledger Art chronicled the daily life and events that shaped the life of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Kiowa and Lakota Peoples.

Many examples of Historical Ledger Art are available online, in museum collections and private collectors.

A great online resource on Ledger Art is hosted by the University of California, Sand Diego. It has many original ledger book that have been digitized for research and viewing by the general public.

Ross Frank heads up the website.

www.plainsledgerart.org



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

George Cutis Levi is a member of the Cheyenne & Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma. He was raised in the Western Oklahoma Communities of El Reno, Concho and Geary. He is a Professional Artist that creates Ledger Art, Acrylic Paintings, Parfleche Works and Custom Beadwork.