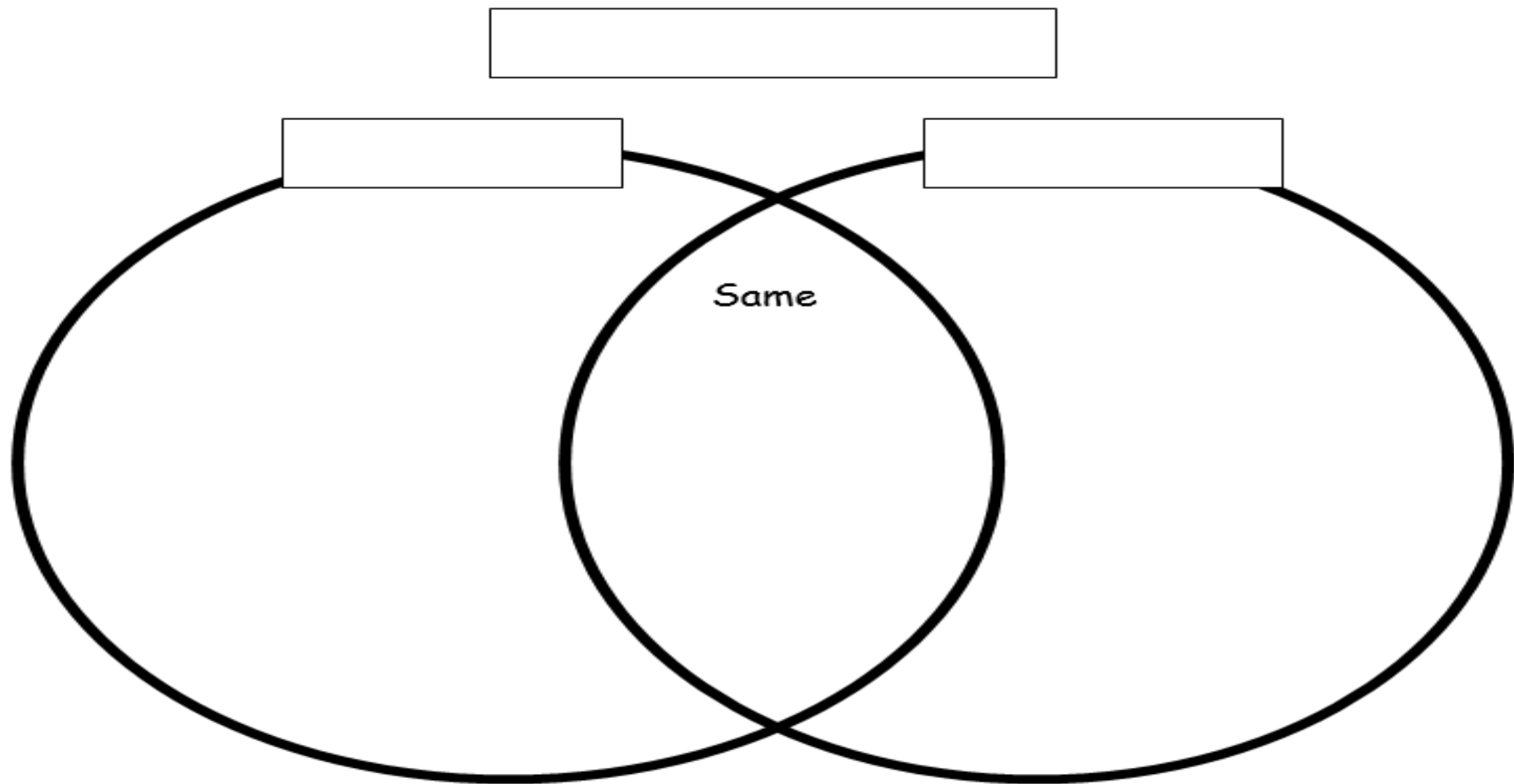




## Compare and Contrast

Use the Venn Diagram that follows to list how these bison are different and the same.





***Louis ShipShee (Prairie Band  
Potawatomi)***

Born 1896, Prairie Band Potawatomi  
Reservation, Kansas

Died 1975, Topeka, Kansas

*Young Male Bison*, mid-20th century

Oil on canvas

Gift of Donald Lambert, 2014.169

ShipShee's portrait of the American Bison (*Bison bison*) honors the animal critical to the survival of Native peoples living on the Great Plains during the nineteenth century. In addition to providing large quantities of meat, bison yielded hides for shelter and clothing, dung for fuel, horns and bones for tools and utensils, bladders for containers, hair for rope, and sinews for bowstrings. While ShipShee was born after the near-extinction of the Bison, the animal would have been an important part of his cultural heritage.





**Patricia DuBose Duncan**

Born 1932, Nashville, Tennessee

*Bison and Magpie*, 1991

Photocopy collage with colored pencil and charcoal on paper

Gift of the artist, 1998.56

During the 1990s Duncan used her photography and mixed-media compositions to support the preservation of Kansas prairies. She played an instrumental role in the establishment of the Tall Grass Prairie National Preserve north of Strong City, Kansas in 1996. One aim of the prairie movement in Kansas was to rejuvenate the Bison population, which had been decimated by white hunters during the second half of the nineteenth century. Only 550 of the animals remained in 1889. Today Bison number more than 400,000 in North America. Most of these prairie-preserving herbivores roam in publically owned parks such as the Konza Prairie outside of Manhattan, Kansas, which currently has a herd of 286. An increasing number of bison are also raised on private ranches.



# Bison Facts

*Bison bison*

## Fun Facts

A bison's coat is so thick and insulating that snow can cover it without melting.

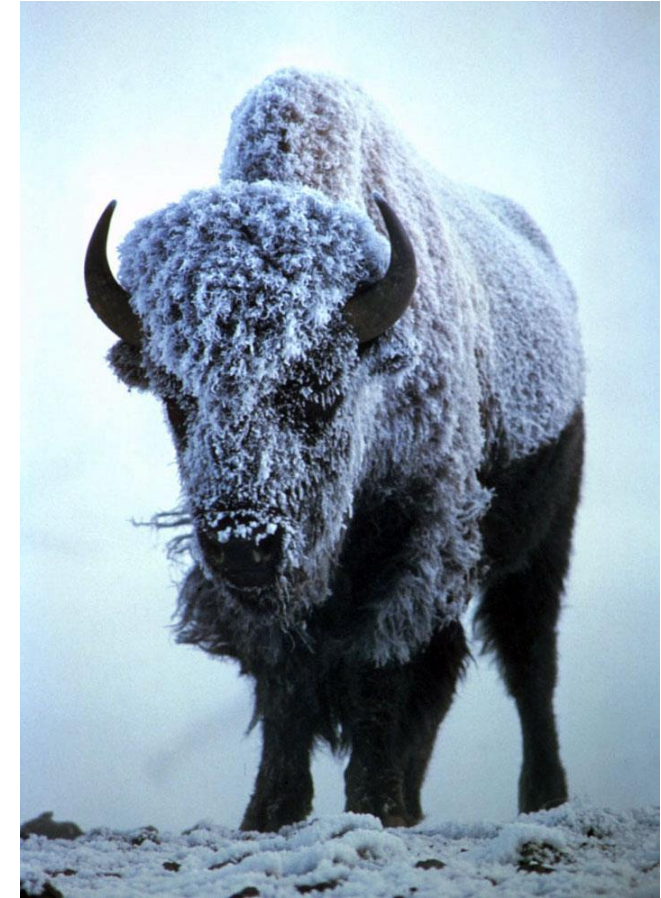
When a bison's tail sticks straight up that means the animal is very angry.

Bison can run very fast, up to 40 mph.

Bison can jump as high as 6 vertical feet as well as can spin around quickly.

Mature male bison weigh up to 2,000 pounds and stand 6 feet tall, while females weigh up to 1,000 pounds. The American bison grows to 7 to 11.5 feet long from head to rump, and its tail adds an extra 20 to 24 inches.

Bison calves weigh 30–70 pounds at birth.



# Bison or Buffalo?

The proper term is Bison. But, people often refer to the animal as Buffalo— including in Kansas' State Song, *Home on the Range*.

The confusion arose when Europeans first encountered these majestic animals. Our American bison looked most like their 'water buffalo' (*Bubalus bubalis*) back home. That was the point in which American bison began being referred to as buffalo.

American and European Bison	Cape and Water Buffalo
	
Native to North America and Europe	Native to Asia and Africa
Distinctive large hump on back	No hump
Horns are small, sharp and point upward	Horns can span up to 6ft tip to tip!
Thick woolly fur adapted to handle cold climates	Thin fur adapted for warm climates
Weigh 700-2200 lbs	Weigh 1870-2650 lbs
Can live up to 19 years	Can live up to 30 years
Products you might buy: steak, ground bison	Products you might buy: water buffalo mozzarella

# White Buffalo



A bison named Big Medicine (1933–1959) was born in the wild on the National Bison Range on Montana's Flathead Indian Reservation. The name "Big Medicine" was chosen due to the sacred power attributed to white bison. Following its death in 1959, its body was preserved and is now displayed at the Montana Historical Society in Helena

The white buffalo is a sacred sign in Lakota and other Plains Indians cultures. Chief Arvol Looking Horse is the current keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe. The story of the pipe is:

"Nineteen generations ago the beautiful spirit we now refer to as White Buffalo Calf Woman brought the Sacred C'anupa (Sacred Pipe) to our People. She taught the People the Seven Sacred Rites and how to walk on Mother Earth in a sacred manner. Pte-san win-yan. As she left, she turned into a young beautiful white buffalo and then she walked over the hill and out of sight. This is where she received her name, White Buffalo Calf Woman. She gifted us with the Seven Sacred Rites that still sustain our People today. The person who smokes the sacred pipe achieves union with all Beings. By smoking this C'anupa, you will make direct personal contact with the Great Mystery. . . Following the Way of this Sacred C'anupa, you will walk in a sacred way upon the earth, for the Earth is your grandmother and your mother and she is sacred." — Chief Arvol Looking Horse

The story is a prophecy. White Buffalo Calf Woman told the people that she would return in the form of a white buffalo calf and that it would be both a blessing and a warning. When the white animal shows its sacred color there will be great changes upon the earth. Arvol and many others interpret those changes to mean the current ecological crises taking place. If humanity continues to live without harmony with the earth it will be cursed, but if spiritual unity and harmony with the earth is achieved humanity will be blessed.

White buffalo can result from one of several physical conditions:

- They may be albinos, in which case they will remain unpigmented throughout their lives, and may also have hearing and vision problems.
- They may be leucistic, with white fur but blue eyes, instead of the pink seen in albinos.
- They may have a rare genetic condition which causes a buffalo to be born white, but to become brown within a year or two as it matures.

White buffalo are extremely rare; the National Bison Association has estimated that they only occur in approximately one out of every 10 million births.



# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

## WOOD BISON



- Bulls average 1800lbs
- Taller with a square hump
- Darker in color
- Cape usually does not form distinct boundary behind shoulder
- Long, straight hair slopping down on forehead
- Little or no chap hair on forelegs
- Smaller, more pointed beard

## PLAINS BISON



- Bulls average 1600lbs
- Stockier with a rounded hump
- Lighter in color
- In summer, cape forms distinct boundary behind shoulder
- Frizzy hair on head
- Chaps of long hair on forelegs
- Large rounded beard



-  Plains Bison Range
-  Wood Bison Range
-  Overlap



# Kansas hosts the nation's fifth-largest bison population!

**The Konza Prairie Biological Station, the Flint Hills south of Manhattan**

(photos are of the Konza Bison herd)

**Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve near Strong City**

**Maxwell Wildlife Refuge near Canton**

**Sandsage Bison Range & Wildlife Area near Garden City**



Private bison ranches offer public tours seasonally – typically May through October – with reservations. Duff's Buffalo Ranch ([duffsbuffaloranch.com](http://duffsbuffaloranch.com)) near Scott City in western Kansas can easily be combined with a trip to see Little Jerusalem Badlands and Lake Scott state parks. In northeast Kansas, find tours at Lazy Heart D Bison Ranch (<https://lazyheartdranch.weebly.com/>) about 10 miles north of Wamego and Plumlee Buffalo Ranch (<http://www.plumleeranch.com/>) about 10 miles south of Wamego.



*Bison bison/Bison latifrons*

## SIZE COMPARISON

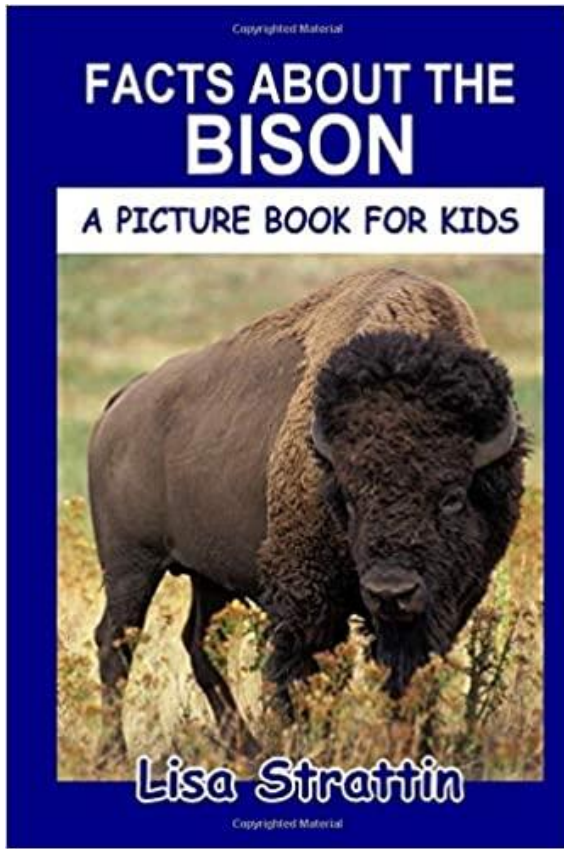
The modern American bison  
(*Bison bison*)

The extinct Giant long-horned bison  
(*Bison latifrons*)

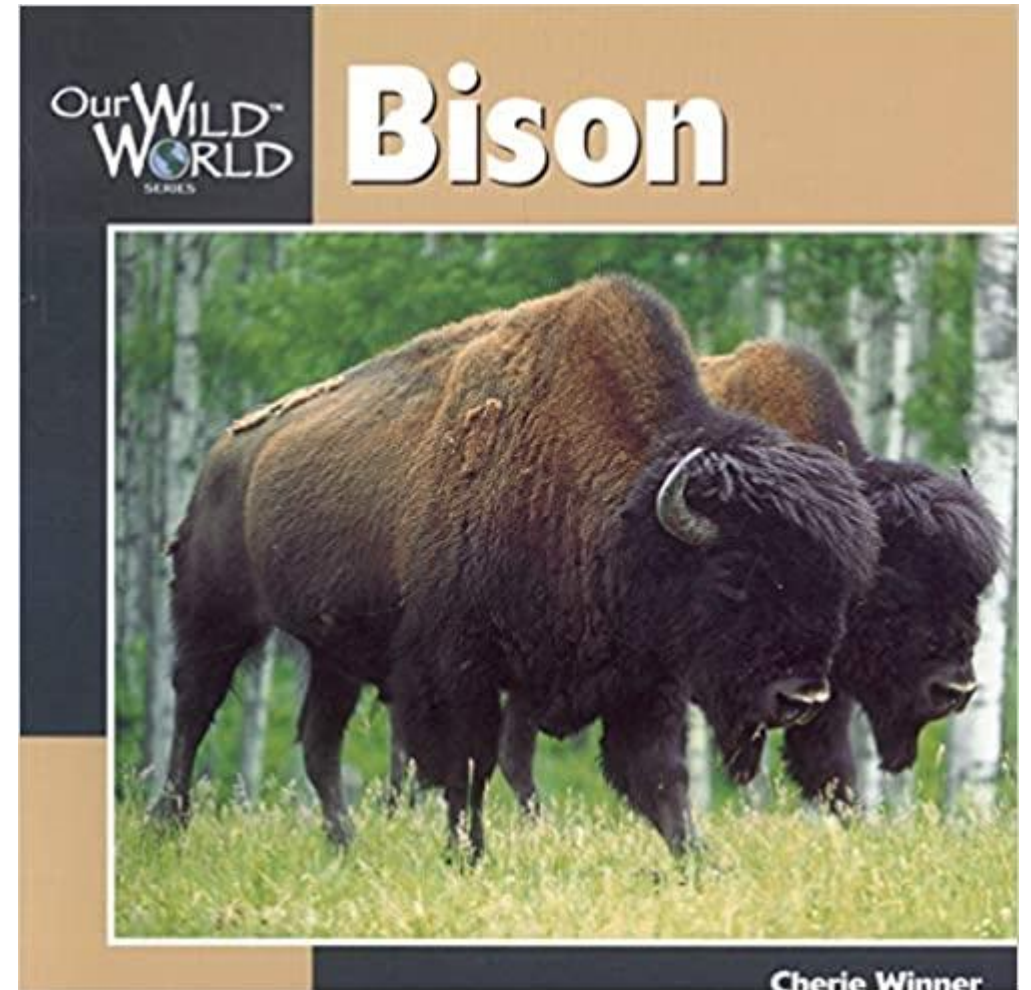
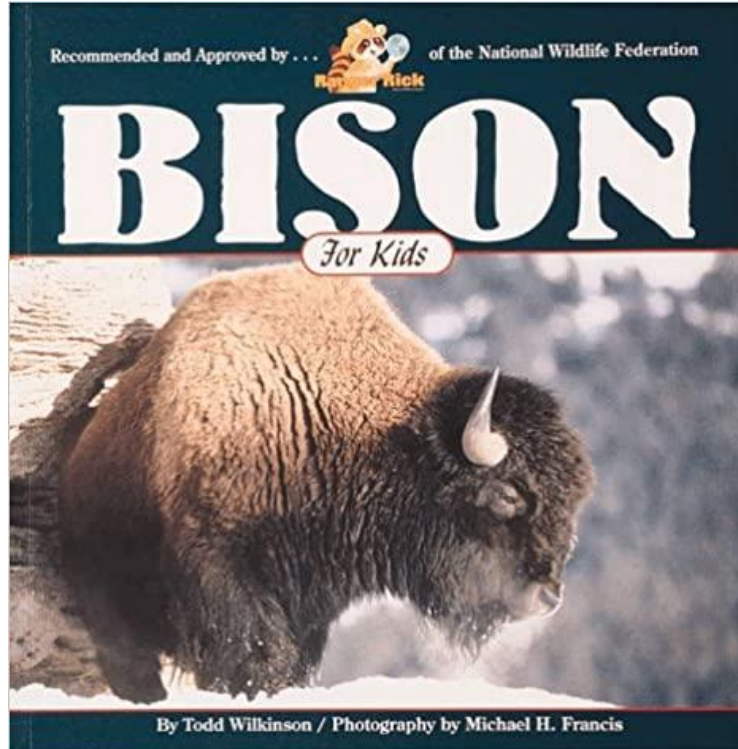


*Bison latifrons* Harlan, 1825 fossil buffalo skeleton from the Pleistocene of North America (public display, Cincinnati Museum of Natural History & Science, Cincinnati, Ohio, USA). The extinct giant buffalo, *Bison latifrons*, was remarkable in having horns with a more than 3 times longer span than the modern American buffalo (*Bison bison*). The overall body size of the giant bison was also considerably larger than modern bison.





Learn more about bison



# Additional Bison from the BMA collection



**Peter (Fritz) Fritts Felten Jr.**

*Title unknown (bison), 1970*

Woodcut on illustration board

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, gift of Nancy S. Vogel, Ph.D. in memory of John H. and Irene Schaaque Vogel and Gerald M. Vogel, S13.2015

**Charles Malcolm Campbell**

*Bison, ca. 1935*

Linoleum cut on paper

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, S6c.2015





**Josie Eresch**

*Prairie and Buffalo*, 1932

Lithograph on paper

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, gift of Ann Thackrey Berry, 2007.49

**Lisa Grossman**

*Night's Red Edge*, 2009

Watercolor and screenprint on paper

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, gift of Richard D. Olson, 2010.85





**Patricia DuBose Duncan**

*Red Prairie With Bison*, 1990

Acrylic on canvas

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, gift of Nancy Landon Kassebaum Baker, Burdick, Kansas, 1998.6

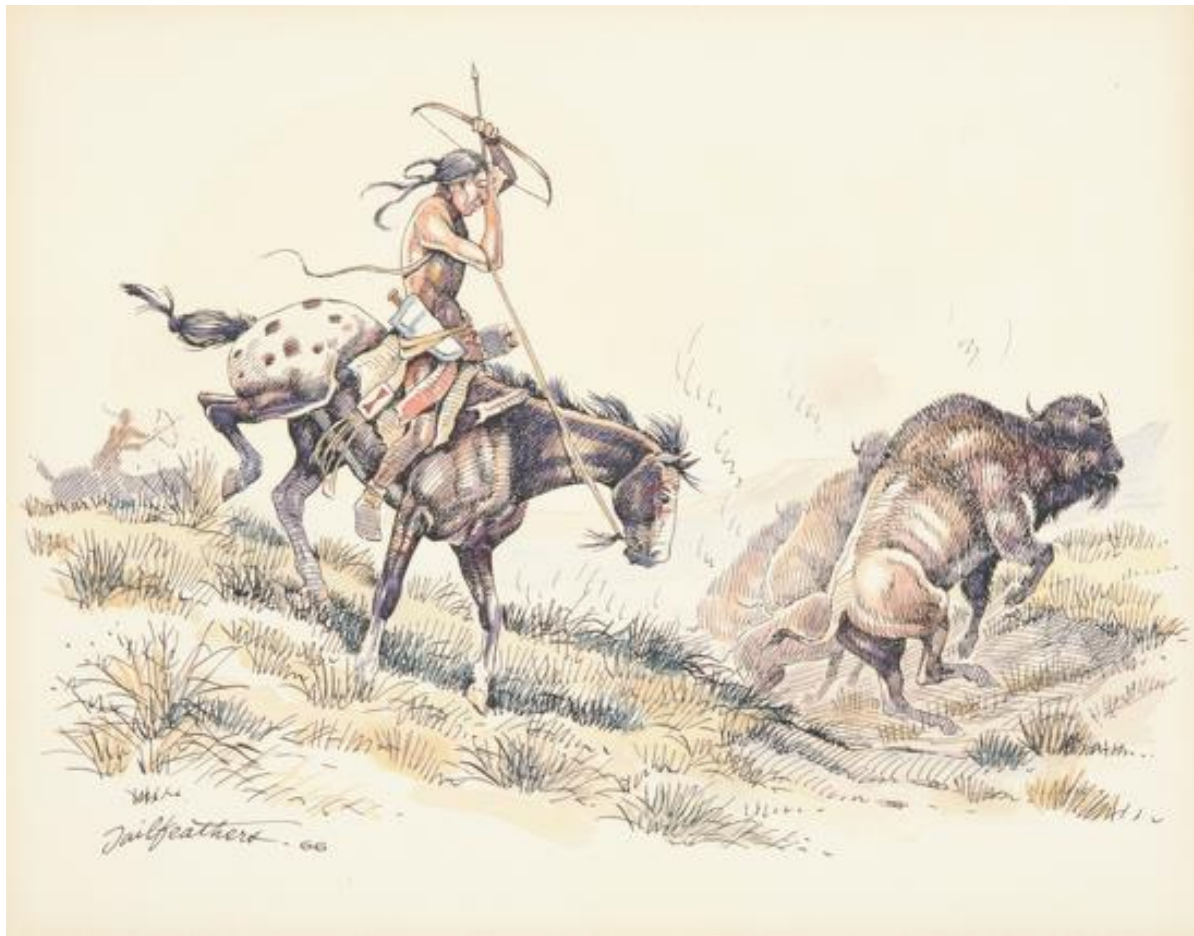
*Bison - Central Kansas #5*, 20th century

Chromogenic print

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, gift of the artist, 1998.110







**Gerald Tailfeathers** (Kanai Nation, Canada)

*Title unknown (chasing bison), 1966*

Etching with watercolor (hand coloring) on paper

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, gift of Mel and Mary Cottom, 2011.148

**Joseph Wolf**

*Wild Animals, 1874*

Engraving on paper

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, gift of C.E. Denman, 2008.507





**Karl Mattern**

*Buffalo Wallow*, ca. 1947

Oil on canvas

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, Friends of Art purchase, 1949.2

**Oscar Vance Larmer**

*Natives*, 1992

Watercolor on paper

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, gift of the artist, 1993.1



The lithograph was based on Curry's preliminary sketch for this figure in the murals he painted in the Kansas State Capitol in Topeka between 1937 and 1942.



**John Steuart Curry**

*Buffalo and Calf*, ca. 1940

Ink over graphite on paper

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, bequest of Kathleen G. Curry, 2002.918

*Buffalo*, ca. 1940

Watercolor and graphite on paper

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, bequest of Kathleen G. Curry, 2002.1131b

*The Plainsman*, published 1945

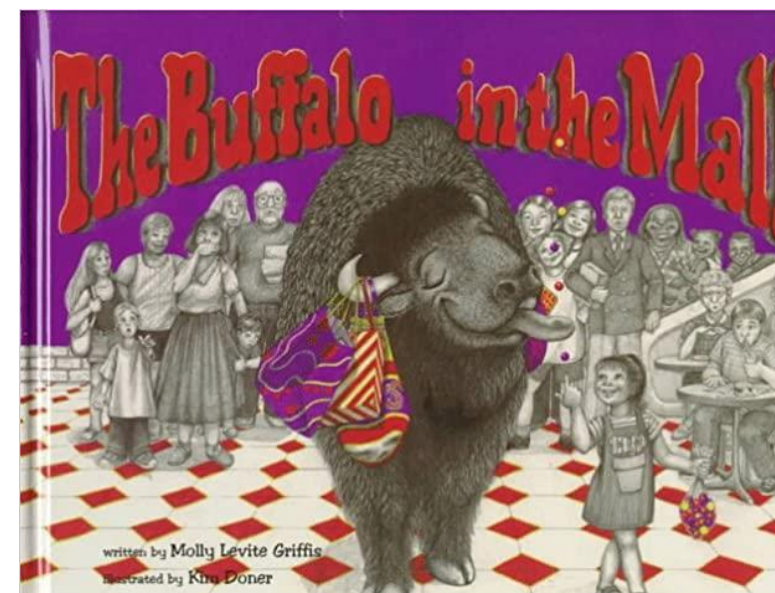
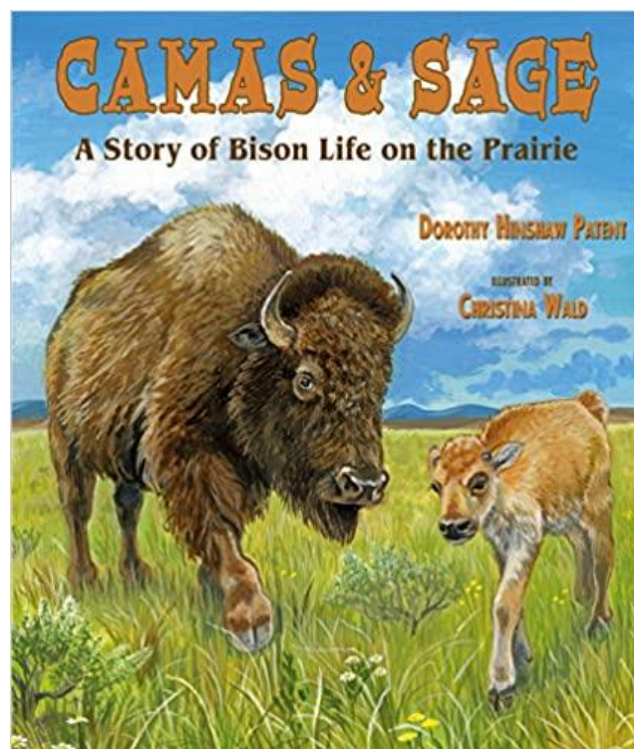
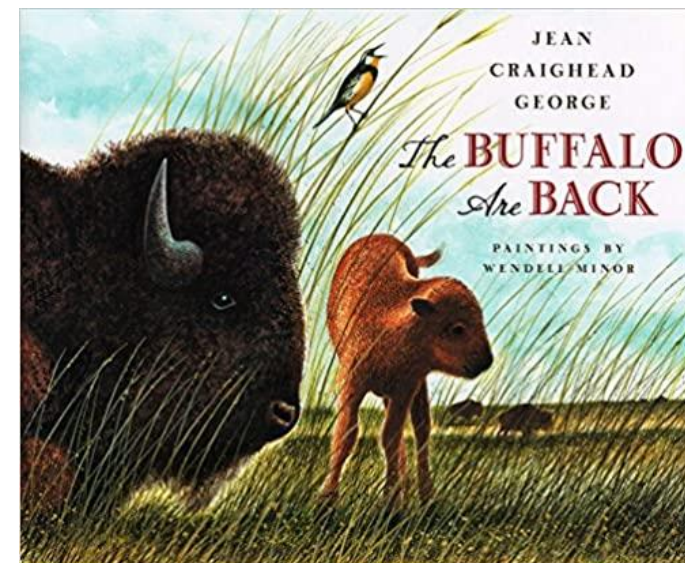
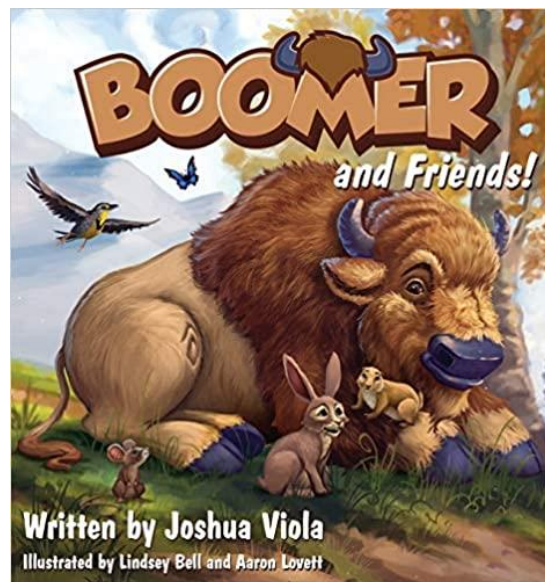
Lithograph on paper

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, bequest of Raymond & Melba Budge, 1992.126

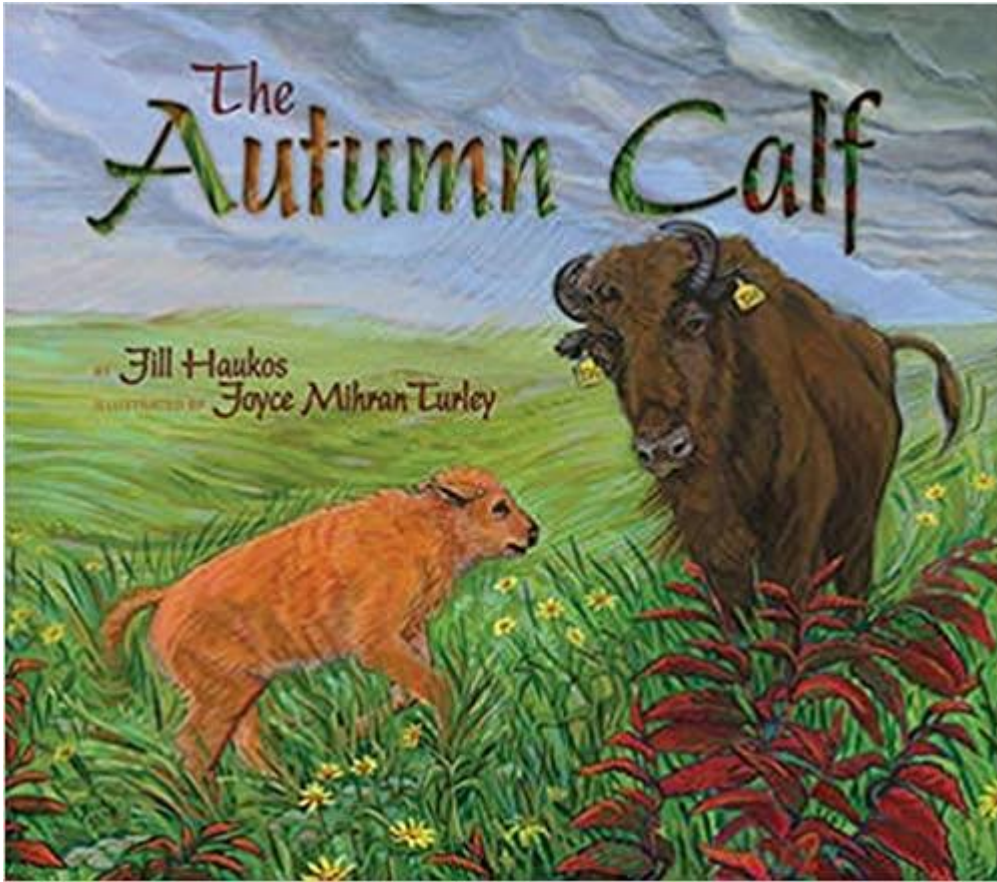




# Picture Books



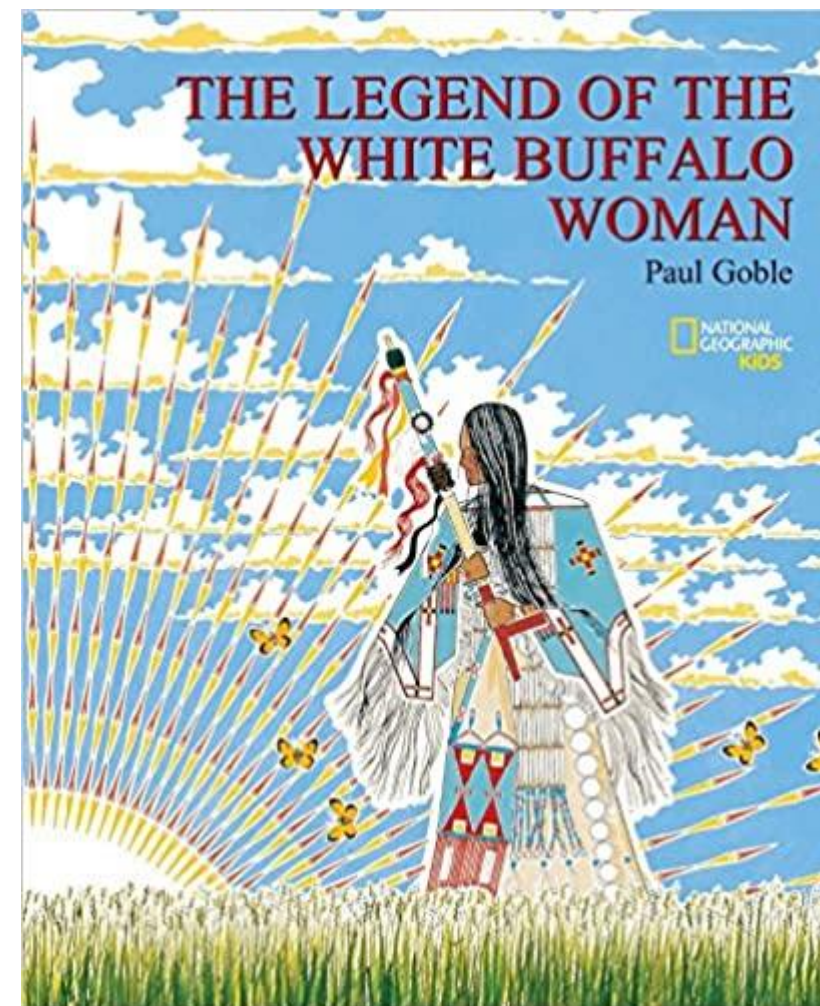
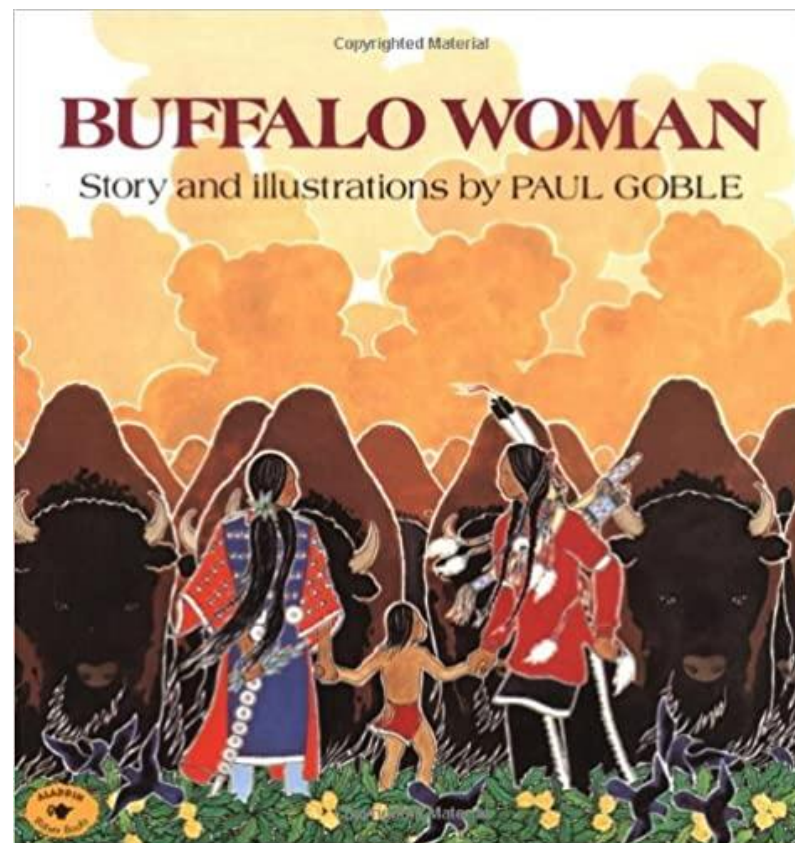
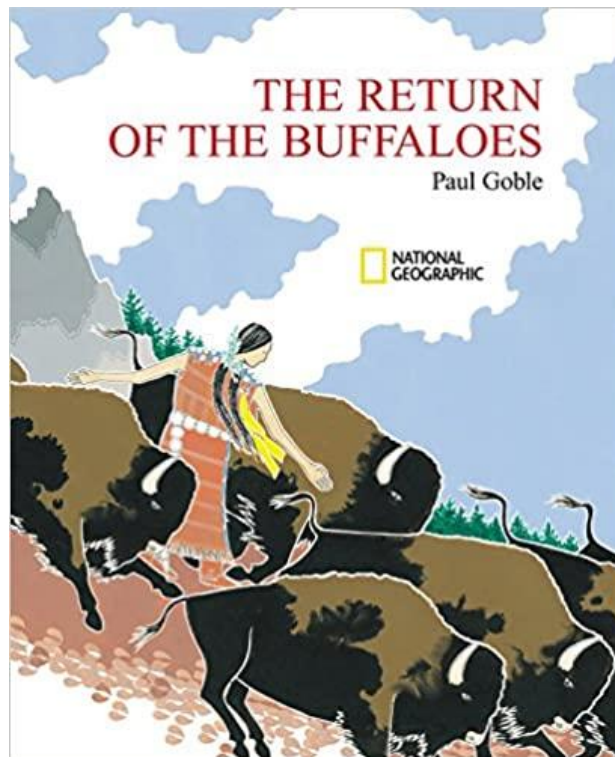




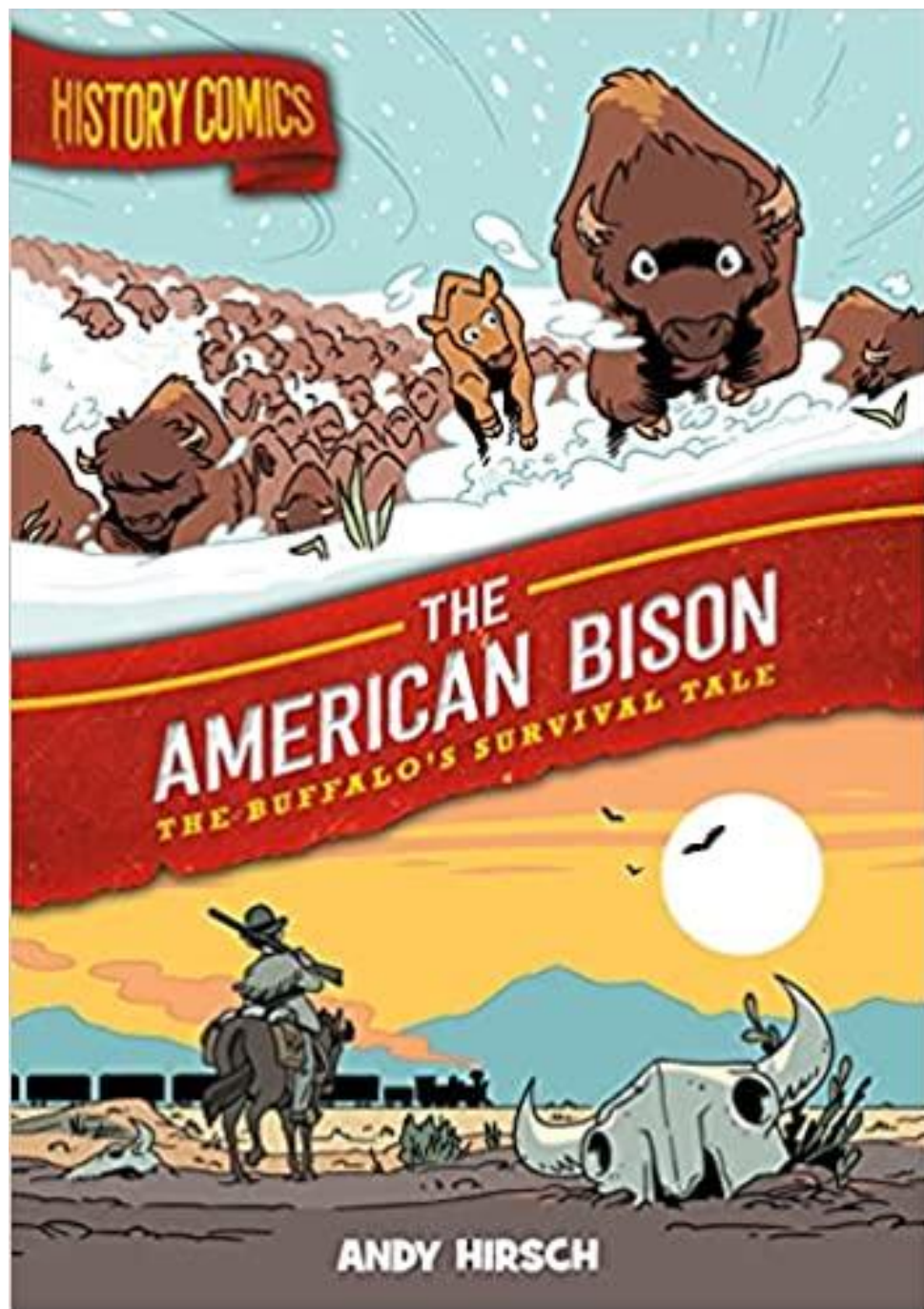
Most bison calves are born in mid-spring. However, one August morning at the Konza Prairie Biological Station near Manhattan, Kansas, a new little orange-coated bison is discovered within the herd. The people who manage the herd become concerned about her welfare, as they know that since she is so little she faces many challenges to survive the winter in the tall-grass prairie of the Flint Hills. Will she survive the harsh winter so she can learn to munch fresh new grass with her mother in the spring? This beautifully illustrated book takes the reader through a year on the tall-grass prairie with the bison herd, where we learn about bison management practices, the local plants and animals that grow and live in the ecosystem, and the importance of controlled burning to keep the native prairie grasses healthy and remove invasive species.

This book was written by Jill Haukos, the educator at the Konza Prairie







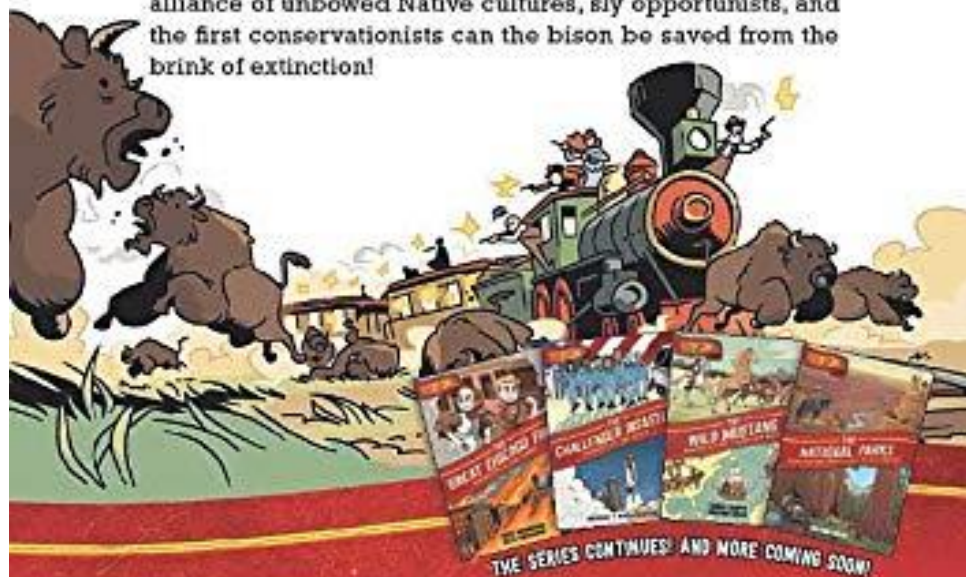


## AGAINST ALL ODDS!

The prairie shakes under the hooves of nearly thirty million bison. As fast as a horse, as tall as a person, and heavier than both combined, they roam from coast to coast. A century later, people struggle to find a single one left alive. How did the great herds disappear, and what does it take to bring them back?

### THE AMERICAN BISON: THE BUFFALO'S SURVIVAL TALE

Bison lived in balance with humans for centuries before technology, commerce, and politics upset their world. In the wake of colonialism and westward expansion, the mighty herds soon began to thin and disappear. Only through an alliance of unbowed Native cultures, sly opportunists, and the first conservationists can the bison be saved from the brink of extinction!



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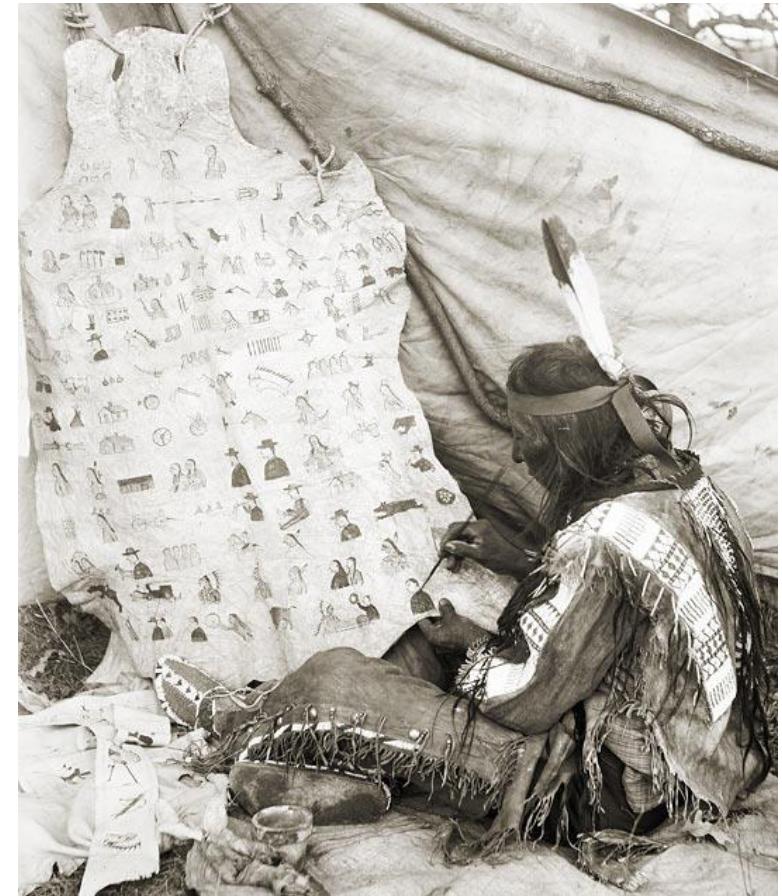
# Art Projects

## Winter Counts

Winter counts are pictorial depictions of Lakota history. Prior to the adoption of a written language, Lakotas used winter counts as a means of recording important historical events. They were originally done on animal hides, but can be found in recycled ledger books after European/white incursion into the Dakotas.



Sioux Indian Museum, U.S. Department of the Interior, Indian Arts and Crafts Board, Rapid City

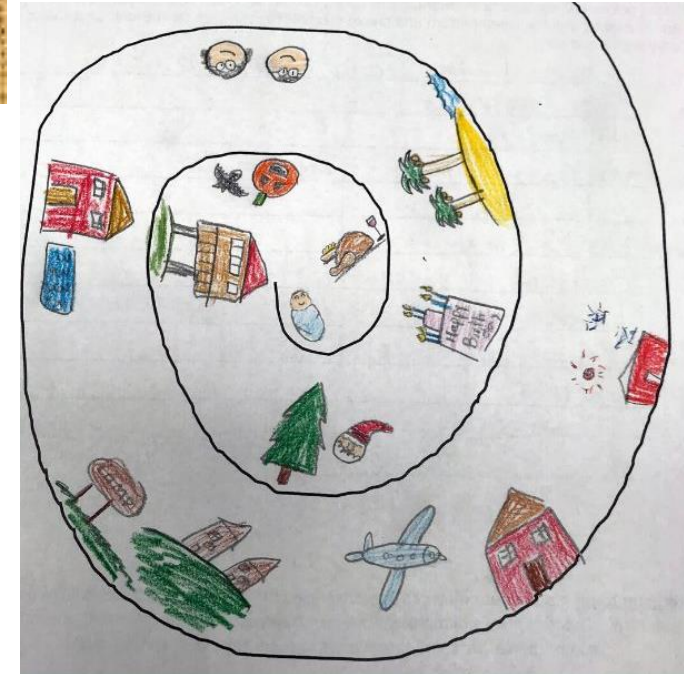




You can create your own winter count – or pictorial calendar. Obviously you won't be including bison hunts, but you can record events in your life. You can use a paper bag to make an animal skin.



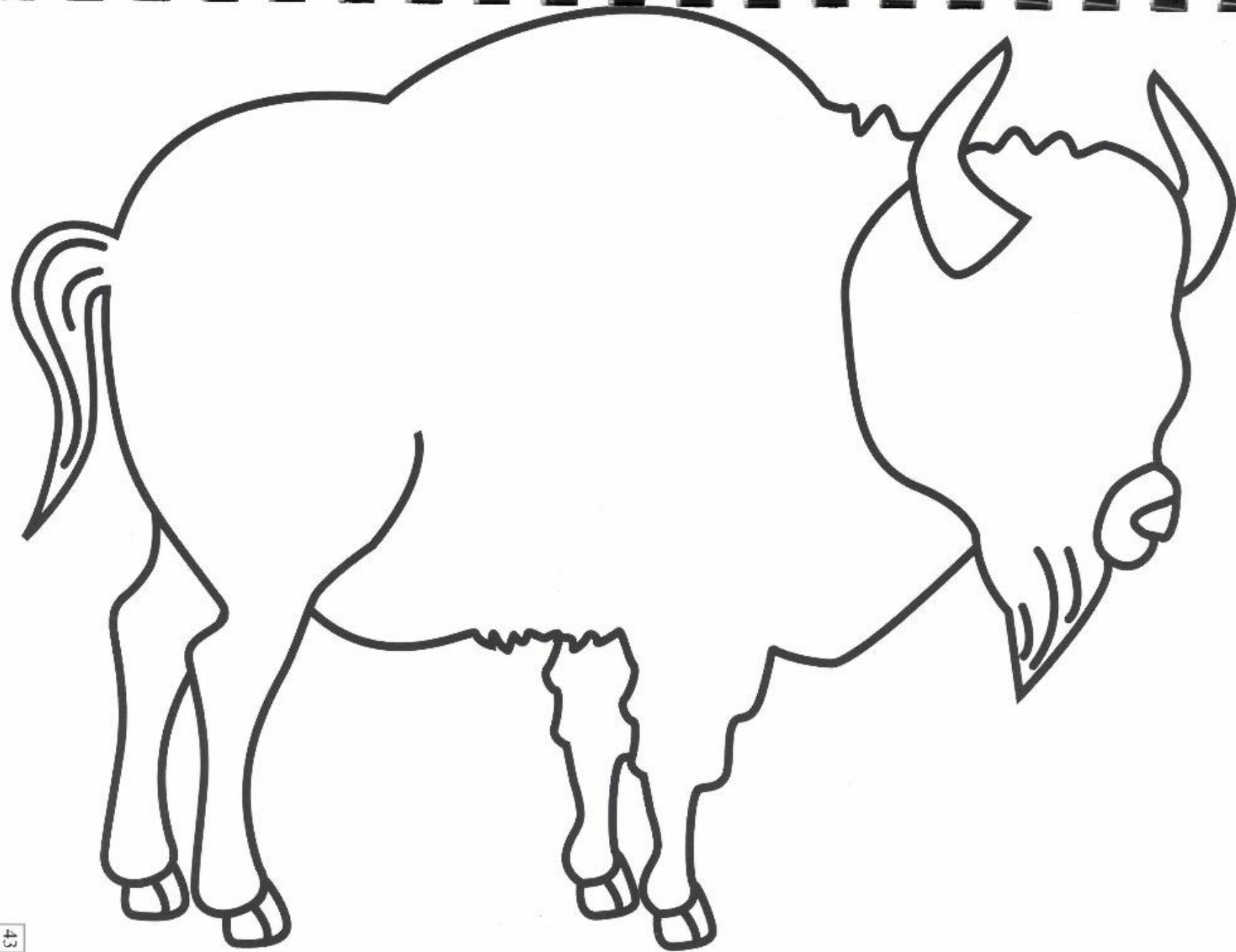
Decide how you will keep your calendar. Will one pictograph represent an hour, a day, a week, or a month? How long will you record your history? At the designated intervals, draw a picture to represent a key event or moment from that time. Make sure you choose something that will spur your memory later on!



Bison collages by past ARTSmart friends.









**Karl Mattern**

*Buffalo Wallow*, ca. 1947

Oil on canvas

KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art,

Friends of Art purchase, 1949.2



# Origami

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/84372193006993909/>

This is a more difficult origami project. Click here for a video

